

Dallas ISD Farm to School Implementation Plan

Farm to School Team

BACKGROUND

Dallas ISD is located in the urban, metropolitan area of Dallas, Texas and has over 180,000 students with over 90% considered economically disadvantaged. A loose Farm to School team was established in May 2012 to prepare a Farm to School Planning Grant proposal for a USDA grant cycle. This team consisted of Dallas ISD Food and Child Nutrition Services (FCNS) staff, Dora Rivas, Margaret Lopez and Brad Trudeau. Also included was Sonia White, a consultant with Good InDeed, Inc. The primary activity from May 2012-November 2012 was the writing, submission and waiting of the award. In November 2012, USDA awarded Dallas ISD with a Farm to School Planning Grant, effective December 1, 2012. Immediately the team went to work to create a steering committee and have an initial meeting. On December 14, 2012 the first steering committee meeting was held. Since December 2012, the team has met monthly, with work groups meeting more often as needed.

During the Planning Phase (December 1, 2012-November 30, 2013) of Farm to School, the Steering Committee has accomplished the following:

- Met and exceeded established goals set in initial USDA Farm to School planning grant:
 - Identified local non-profits and community partners with F2S expertise to serve on the planning/steering committee.
 - Identified local farmers, ranchers, wholesalers/distributors, processors, manufacturers who have a stake in F2S program.
 - Held initial planning meeting and subsequent monthly steering committee meetings.
 - Identified menu items which are grown/produced locally and available seasonally. These items were included in the new Harvest of the Month program and featured on cafeteria menus. (See attached *Harvest of the Month Plan* and *2013-2014 HOM Outreach Plan* documents).
 - Identified farmers/vendors who can provide local, seasonal foods. (See attached *Harvest of the Month Plan* and *2013-2014 HOM Outreach Plan* documents).
 - Identified seasonal foods being grown in school gardens and being used in Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Program taste tests which could be integrated into school menus. This activity also became part of the development of the Harvest of the Month documents.

- Identified 36 schools which currently have school gardens in place, of these 36, 26 are supported by a structured gardening program and curriculum. (See attached REAL School Garden summary sheet and Complete List of Dallas ISD School Gardens).
 - Determined baseline spending on local/regional grown foods by Dallas ISD for the 2012-2013 school year and can use this as a comparison for subsequent years.
 - Determined baseline number of servings of local/regional food served in school cafeteria for the 2012-2013 school year and can use this as a comparison for subsequent years.
 - Gathered data from recent plate waste studies to be used to evaluate student consumption of locally/regionally grown foods.
 - Identified Dallas ISD campuses which will participate in Texas Grow! Eat! Go! Project and begin interventions.
 - Completed a Farm to School Implementation/Action Plan for Dallas ISD.
- Completed actions and objectives in addition to original Planning Grant:
 - Developed and implemented a Harvest of the Month program with a complete outreach and promotion materials. (See attached Harvest of the Month marketing materials; *Harvest of the Month Plan* and *2013-2014 HOM Outreach Plan* documents).
 - Integrated *Harvest of the Month Tasty Teasers* activity into existing Coordinated School Health resource calendar.
 - Defined the district definition of “local” and “regional”. Local is identified as being grown and/or processed in Texas. Regional has been defined as grown and/or processed in a neighboring state.
 - Intentionally leveraged commodity dollars to purchase produce through DoD and Texas Farm to School to procure produce items identified as “local”.
 - Intentionally identified local produce items and included these items in our new Harvest of the Month program. These items were mostly procured through DoD and Texas Farm to School.
 - Integrated the following locally grown menu items for 2013-2014 school year: Black Eyed Peas, Watermelons, Apples, Sweet Potatoes, Greens, Cabbage, Butternut Squash, Beets, Grapefruit, Oranges, Red Potatoes, Cream Peas and Peaches.

COMMITTED MEMBERS

Since December 2012, a core group of individuals has been committed to sitting on the Dallas ISD Farm to School Steering Committee. These members are

re: **Sonia White MS**, Owner and Consultant for Sonia White Consulting—Planning Grant Facilitator/Coordinator. Sonia White is owner of Sonia White Consulting, which provides administrative and programmatic consulting for nonprofits who participate or wish to participate in federally funded nutrition programs. Ms. White is an expert in the field of summer feeding and the

USDA Summer Food Service Program, with over 10 years of experience in managing the program. Prior to launching her own company, she implemented and oversaw a mobile summer feeding program, *Food on the Move*, which was recognized nationally by USDA, as well as locally by The Dallas Center for Nonprofit Management. Additionally she has expertise with other USDA programs such as the CACFP and NSLP and assists clients in navigating through the intricacies of all of these federally funded nutrition programs. She has her Masters in Supervision and Administration from Bank Street College in New York City.

- **Scott Feille**, Regional Director; Real School Gardens. Before joining REAL School Gardens to lead its flagship program in Fort Worth, Texas, Scott Feille taught at Westcliff Elementary for eight years. First working with special education classes and then with fifth-graders, he was recognized by the Fort Worth Independent School District as one of the top 100 reading teachers in the district, and also served as a lead science curriculum writer for the Curriculum Frameworks program. In 2006, he received the Lockheed Martin Teaching Chair of Excellence Award in Elementary Science and served as the Place Based Education Chair for the North American Association of Environmental Education in 2010. Scott holds a B.A. in Philosophy and Political Science, magna cum laude, from Texas Christian University and is a Texas Master Naturalist.
- **Dora Rivas**, MS, SNS, RD; Executive Director FCNS; Dallas ISD. Dora Rivas has been the Executive Director of Food & Child Nutrition Services since January 2005. The Dallas food service department serves over 164,000 meals per day at the 216 school cafeterias and employs more than 1,300 employees. Ms. Rivas has been in school food service for 34 years. Prior to coming to Dallas, she worked for the Brownsville ISD food service department for 27 years. Dora received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Food and Nutrition from Texas A & I in Kingsville, TX (now A & M) and her Master of Science degree in Institutional Management from the Department of Restaurant and Institutional Management at Kansas State University in 1980. She is certified with the Texas Association for School Nutrition and credentialed as a School Nutrition Specialist with the School Nutrition Association, and is also a Registered Dietitian with the American Dietetic Association.
- **Margaret Lopez** MS, RD, SNS; Director for Nutrition, Training and Quality Assurance FCNS; Dallas ISD. Margaret Lopez joined Dallas ISD Food and Child Nutrition Services in 2011 as the Director for Nutrition, Training and Quality Assurance where all elementary schools and middle schools have been recognized as Healthier US Schools. She has been instrumental in developing an At-risk Afterschool Supper Program, and Breakfast in the Classroom program since joining the District. As an educator, Margaret taught high school home economics students for seven years, and has taught and mentored dietetic students from several universities including Texas Women's University, UT Southwestern Medical School San Antonio, Southwestern Medical School, and Universities of Alabama, Delaware and Tennessee. She is a registered dietitian and started her professional career at Presbyterian Hospital of Dallas. She is also credentialed as a School Nutrition Specialist with the School

Nutrition Association. Margaret received her undergraduate degree in Foods and Nutrition from University of North Texas and Master's Degree in Nutrition from Case Western Reserve in Cleveland, Ohio.

- **Brad Trudeau** FMP, SNS; Director of Production, Equipment and Procurement FCNS, Dallas ISD. Brad Trudeau is currently Executive Chef and Director of Production, Equipment and Procurement at the Dallas Independent School District where he has been employed for eighteen years. He previously worked in sales with Sysco Corporation, hotel operations for Hilton Corporation, foodservice director for Marriott Business Food Services and various restaurants. Brad is also an Adjunct Professor in the culinary arts department at El Centro College in Dallas where he has taught various classes since 1996. Graduated from the University of Cincinnati with a BBA degree in Finance. Brad was a Certified Executive Chef with the American Culinary Federation from 1992 until 2007. He is currently certified as a School Nutrition Specialist by the School Nutrition Association and Foodservice Management Professional by the National Restaurant Association.
- **Vivian McCullough**, Owner of TSD Distributing (Dallas ISD produce vendor). Vivian works closely with Dallas ISD and local wholesalers to provide access to local producers. Vivian is the second generation owner of TSD which was started by her mother.
- **Stacy Chernes**, President; Get Healthy Dallas; Paul Quinn College faculty. *Stacy Chernes moved to Dallas in 2007 to pursue a Ph.D. in Religious Ethics at Southern Methodist University. She holds a BS in Education and Social Policy and BAs in History and Urban Studies from Northwestern University, and a MA in Religious Ethics from Columbia Theological Seminary. Between graduating from Northwestern and returning to pursue advanced academic degrees, Stacy worked for two large multinational corporations in various capacities, including Strategic Financial Analysis, Strategic Operations, Community Affairs, and Training. During this period, Stacy began investigating the potential for leveraging private sector expertise in service of public good. This connection between private and public good is central to Stacy's doctoral dissertation, which focuses upon democracy and social ethics. She is the co-founder and President of Get Healthy Dallas.*
- **Susie Marshall**, Executive Director, GROW North Texas; Acting President, Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association. Susie Marshall is also founder of the Gleaning Network of Texas, which is a Dallas-based not-for-profit organization that finds surplus produce and utilizes volunteers to distribute it to food assistance programs across North Texas. She has over 10 years of experience working with food producers in various settings. It was relationships with these producers that helped light a passion for the local food system. From this work has emerged the new GROW North Texas organization that will work to create an ideal food system in North Texas through organic gardening education, cooking/nutrition education, and support of local agriculture production. Susie is currently serving as the President of the Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association. She also has training in food policy and community food systems as well as over 20 years' experience working with youth and volunteer groups. A native of the Dallas area, Susie has a Bachelor's degree from

Texas Wesleyan University, a Master's degree in Health and Physical Education from Texas A&M – Commerce, and a Master's of Theological Studies from the Perkins School of Theology at SMU.

- **Judy Warren**, Ph.D., Professor, Special Initiatives Coordinator; Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. Judith L. Warren is a professor with Texas AgriLife Extension Service at Texas A&M University System. She holds a M.S. and Ph.D. in Education from Syracuse University, receiving a Dissertation Fellowship from the All-University Gerontology Center and a B.S. degree in Home Economics from Virginia Tech. Dr. Warren has been an Extension educator since 1981. She is currently PI on a \$5 million dollar grant with the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA/USDA) to address child obesity through family-focused programming, collaborating with the UT Health Dell Center for Healthy Living. She is on the Steering Committee for *Live Smart Texas* and *Partnership for Texas Youth*. She has received numerous awards including Extension's Superior Service Award and Texas A&M University Association of Former Students Faculty Distinguished Achievement Award in Extension and Continuing Education. Dr. Warren is a member of Leadership Texas – Class of '99 and the Governor's Executive Development Program – Class of XXIV. She serves as Advisor to Texas Extension Education Association, a group dedicated to supporting families through lifelong learning.
- **Alyssa Herold**, Farm to School Program Specialist; Texas Department of Agriculture. Alyssa Herold is the Farm to School Program Specialist in the Food & Nutrition Division at the Texas Department of Agriculture. Alyssa coordinates efforts for the agency's statewide Farm to School initiative, which enhances schools' ability to work with regional producers, creating economic opportunities for Texas agriculture producers and increasing the amount of local products served in school meals. TDA's statewide initiative also helps schools increase or augment programs that build food system literacy among Texas students, through garden-based learning and classroom lessons focused on nutrition and agricultural education. Alyssa is also currently serving as the Texas State Lead representative for the National Farm to School Network.
- **Chad Julka**, Chad Julka is the GROW It Local Program Director for GROW North Texas. He has 15 years experience in business and restaurant management. He has spent the last six years immersing himself in the techniques of sustainable agriculture, working on organic farms and managing farmers markets. Chad believes that everyone should have access to fresh, nutritious food.
- **Jeff Raska**, Dallas County 4-H Program Assistant Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services. Jeff oversees the Farm Day at the Fair and assisted with coordinating Dallas ISD participation in this annual event. Mr. Raska also supports nutrition education through out the county and in schools.

ADVISERS

Outside of our core Farm to School Steering Committee, we rely on individuals and groups for guidance and assistance in our decision making. The following individuals and groups have agreed to advise our Steering Committee on specific matters on an as-needed basis.

- **Coy Frazier**, Dallas ISD, Grounds and Maintenance
- **Paul Gonzales**, Dallas ISD, Grounds and Maintenance
- **Carol Spaulding** Ph.D., Director of Program Evaluation; Texas A&M AgriLife Institute for Obesity Research and Program Evaluation;
- **Janet Hurley**, MPA, Program Specialist II-School IPM, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
- **Dotty Woodson**, Ed.D., Program Specialist-Water Resources, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
- **Brian Preiss**, Hardies Fruit & Vegetable Company
- **Michelle Weech**, Director of Marketing, Hardies Fruit & Vegetable Company
- **Ayra Yarbrough**, Dallas ISD teacher
- **Dallas Charting the Course**, A coalition of more than 60 leaders in the Dallas–Fort Worth joined together to collectively consider how to improve the health of our children in Dallas County and reduce their risk for, and the occurrence of obesity.
- **Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services**, offers practical, how-to, community-based education backed by university research and expertise.

NEEDED MEMBERS & ADVISERS

In order to gain community support and maintain a well-rounded perspective on the needs and interests of our Farm to School initiative, we plan on having a robust advisory committee made up of students, teachers, parents, farmers, gardeners and food wholesalers. Over the next 3 years (beginning with the 2014-2015 school year) we are seeking to recruit a variety of representatives from a variety of audiences. Prospective Advisory Team members include:

- » Cafeteria managers from several schools
- » Teacher representatives from Elementary, Middle and High schools
- » Student representatives from Elementary, Middle and High schools
- » Parent representatives from Elementary, Middle and High schools
- » Food producer representatives
- » School nurse and/or coordinated school health coordinator
- » County extension agency representatives

DETAILS & LOGISTICS

Structure

The Dallas ISD Farm to School Steering Committee is a newly formed committee with the goal of advising and guiding the school district in implementing and sustaining Farm to School practices. Our team is overseen by the Child and Nutrition Department and is primarily responsible for the planning and implementation of the district's Farm to School initiatives regarding menu planning and procurement. Additionally, the Steering Committee makes recommendations and suggestions in

other areas such as coordinated school health, curriculum and school gardens of how Farm to School initiatives can be incorporated and implemented into existing structure. We meet monthly as a group, but have broken out into work groups when needed to complete tasks and objectives. For example, we created work groups to discuss Farm to School Evaluation and School Gardens. These smaller work groups meet more often for a short period of time or until a specific task is completed. The current team was created by invitation and we have added people as the need has arose. This team is permanent and does not have terms. We currently do not have terms on any committee places. An outside consultant, Sonia White acts as the group facilitator, schedules meetings and tracks progress on grant objectives and activities.

Advisory Members typically serve a 2 year term which begins and ends with each school year.

Name

Dallas ISD Farm to School Steering Committee

Responsibilities & Power

The primary responsibility of the Farm to School Steering Committee is to ensure that the objectives and activities of the F2S Planning grant are carried out through the end of the grant cycle and to continue the growth and progress of F2S for the future. Additionally, this committee meets regularly to monitor and track any and all F2S activities within Dallas ISD. There are several committee members, Dora Rivas, Margaret Lopez and Brad Trudeau, who have decision making authority, specifically around Menu Planning, Procurement, Food Safety /Training, and Marketing/Promotion within Dallas ISD. Also on the team is Scott Feille, Regional Director for REAL School Gardens. REAL School Gardens is the primary curriculum and oversight used by the vast majority of schools which have school gardens in Dallas ISD. Scott has decision making authority in regard to REAL School Gardens and how they interact with Dallas ISD schools. Judy Warren, Special Initiatives Coordinator for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services is also a key team member and directly involved with the Texas Grow! Eat! Go! Project and oversees the research for that project.

Relationship building

Many of the team members are also co-workers; however there are also many team members which represent multiple organizations. Many of the team members have collaborated together on other projects related to food access. The team has a very strong relationship and works very well together. We have many disciplines represented. Beginning in January 2014, we will add representation from Charting the Course Dallas, which is a city and county initiative for reducing and preventing obesity in Dallas. Having this collaboration with a city and county initiative will help strengthen the impact of the Farm to School beyond just the school district.

Meetings

The team is accountable to the Food and Child Nutrition Services department of Dallas ISD. The team meets monthly at the Dallas ISD FCNS offices. Sometimes meetings are scheduled off-site at

other locations, such as Hardies Fruit and Vegetable Company, farms, etc. The meetings are facilitated by the F2S Planning grant facilitator, Sonia White.

Meeting Schedule

Meetings are scheduled monthly. Following is a tentative meeting schedule for 2014 based on meeting the 3rd Thursday of each month.

Meeting Date	Proposed Topic(s)
January 23, 2014	Discuss progress on farm meetings/visits to encourage and facilitate more farmer involvement; Taste testing collaboration with Charting the Course team
February 20, 2014	Identify work groups needed and assign leaders to work groups: evaluation; school gardens; coordinated school health
March 27, 2014 (moved because of Spring Break)	Updates on work groups progress;
April 24, 2014 (moved due to Farm to Cafeteria conference in Austin April 15-18)	Overview of Farm to Cafeteria Conference. Identify F2S goals for next school year and create objectives and actions for each goal. Break into work groups if necessary.
May 15, 2014	Identify F2S goals for next school year and create objectives and actions for each goal. Break into work groups if necessary. Present F2S goals, objectives and actions steps to Steering Committee.
June 19, 2014	Review school year end accomplishments; identify need for any new Steering Committee members and begin recruiting.
No July Meeting	
August 21, 2014	Presentation of Harvest of the Month materials for new school year.
September 18, 2014	Update on Farm Day at the Fair (Oct); National School Lunch Week (Oct) and National Farm to School Month (Oct) and Dallas ISD Farm to School initiatives to complement these events.
October 15 or 16, 2014 (Date depends on scheduling of Farm Day at the Fair)	Meeting to be held at State Fair with participation in Farm Day at the Fair.
November 27, 2014	Combine November and December meeting: Update on Farm Day at the Fair; successes for the semester. Plans for 2015.

2015—Third Thursday of each month, excluding July and December (Combine November and December).	Agendas to be determined at a later date.
2016—Third Thursday of each month, excluding July and December (Combine November and December).	Agendas to be determined at a later date.

RESOURCES

- » Farm to School: Assemble a Team, from University of Minnesota Extension – Tips for foodservice directors on building a farm to school team, including a video and many examples.
- » Vermont Farm to School: A Guide for Farm to School Community Action Planning, from Vermont Food Education Every Day (VT FEED) – Detailed information on forming a farm to school team, facilitating farm to school meetings, and developing a community action plan.
- » Healthy School Toolkit (see Chapter 3: Team Up to Implement Your School Nutrition Policy), from the Food Trust – While this chapter of the toolkit is focused on building a School Health Council to advise schools on matters of health policy, many of the same ideas will apply to building a farm to school team.
- » Food Hub’s Knowledge Base (see the “Getting Started” section), from EcoTrust – This library of farm to school guidance is updated regularly and includes user ratings.
- » National Farm to School Network, is a collaborative project with the goal of strengthening and expanding activities in states with existing programs and assisting others that do not yet have programs. www.farmtoschool.org
- » Community Food Security Coalition, provides resources and support for establishing a farm to school program. www.foodsecurity.org
- » Sustainable Food Center, cultivates a healthy community by strengthening the local food system and improving access to nutritious, affordable food. SFC envisions a food-secure community where all children and adults grow, share and prepare healthy, local food. www.sustainablefoodcenter.org
- » Texas Department of Agriculture Farm to School Online Toolkit provides Farm to School resources for schools and producers. www.SquareMeals.org/FarmtoSchool

Vision, Goals, & Context

BACKGROUND AND CURRENT STATUS

Prior to the 2012-2013 school year, Dallas ISD had numerous projects in place which supported Farm to School initiatives. Dallas ISD had approximately 40 schools with gardens on site being used to enhance existing classroom curriculum; Dallas ISD participated in the *Chef's Move to Schools* initiative and also participated in the *Texas Farm to School Commodity Program* for several years. Seventy-three of the campuses participated in the *USDA Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program* where students had the opportunity to experience fresh fruits and veggies. However, none of these programs were collectively operated and/or evaluated as Farm to School initiatives, but all operated independently of one another. In June of 2012, the district applied for the inaugural Farm to School Planning grant. In November 2012 the district was awarded the grant and began its planning phase of Farm to School. The general overview and focus of the original planning grant was that these existing programs needed to be more closely integrated with one another in order for students to receive the highest benefit of consuming locally grown/produced food.

The timing was right to implement a strategic planning process to bring these related programs together under one umbrella and initiative. First, over the years, Dallas ISD had begun to build strong relationships with food vendors who procure locally and regionally. The plan was to leverage these relationships to increase the amount of local and regional offerings in our school cafeterias so they better reflect the foods the students have grown themselves in school gardens and/or sampled in taste tests. Secondly, the district is mandated by state legislation to implement coordinated school health plans K-8 which include elements which are supported by goals of F2S initiatives. Thirdly, we had commitments from key Dallas ISD decision makers and community partners to serve on the F2S planning committee.

Additionally, Dallas ISD was also beginning collaboration with the *Texas Grow! Eat! Go!* project over the next three years. This USDA project is a research project overseen by University of Texas (UT) Health Center to determine the efficacy of 2 intervention programs in elementary schools across Texas which participate in *Coordinated Approach to Child Health* (CATCH). The interventions include Junior Master Gardener and Walk Across Texas curriculum.

During the Planning Phase (December 1, 2012-November 30, 2013) of Farm to School, the Steering Committee has accomplished the following:

- Met and exceeded established goals set in initial USDA Farm to School planning grant:
 - Identified local non-profits and community partners with F2S expertise to serve on the planning/steering committee.
 - Identified local farmers, ranchers, wholesalers/distributors, processors, manufacturers who have a stake in F2S program.

- Held initial planning meeting and subsequent monthly steering committee meetings.
 - Identified menu items which are grown/produced locally and available seasonally. These items were included in the new Harvest of the Month program and featured on cafeteria menus. (See attached *Harvest of the Month Plan* and *2013-2014 HOM Outreach Plan* documents).
 - Identified farmers/vendors who can provide local, seasonal foods. (See attached *Harvest of the Month Plan* and *2013-2014 HOM Outreach Plan* documents).
 - Identified seasonal foods being grown in school gardens and being used in Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Program taste tests which could be integrated into school menus. This activity also became part of the development of the Harvest of the Month documents.
 - Identified 36 schools which currently have school gardens in place, of these 36, 26 are supported by a structured gardening program and curriculum. (See attached REAL School Garden summary sheet and Complete List of Dallas ISD School Gardens).
 - Determined baseline spending on local/regional grown foods by Dallas ISD for the 2012-2013 school year and can use this as a comparison for subsequent years.
 - Determined baseline number of servings of local/regional food served in school cafeteria for the 2012-2013 school year and can use this as a comparison for subsequent years.
 - Gathered data from recent plate waste studies to be used to evaluate student consumption of locally/regionally grown foods.
 - Identified Dallas ISD campuses which will participate in Texas Grow! Eat! Go! Project and begin interventions.
 - Completed a Farm to School Implementation/Action Plan for Dallas ISD.
- Completed actions and objectives in addition to original Planning Grant:
 - Developed and implemented a Harvest of the Month program with a complete outreach and promotion materials. (See attached Harvest of the Month marketing materials; *Harvest of the Month Plan* and *2013-2014 HOM Outreach Plan* documents).
 - Integrated *Harvest of the Month Tasty Teasers* activity into existing Coordinated School Health resource calendar.
 - Defined the district definition of “local” and “regional”. Local is identified as being grown and/or processed in Texas. Regional has been defined as grown and/or processed in a neighboring state.
 - Intentionally leveraged commodity dollars to purchase produce through DoD and Texas Farm to School to procure produce items identified as “local”.
 - Intentionally identified local produce items and included these items in our new Harvest of the Month program. These items were mostly procured through DoD and Texas Farm to School.

- Integrated the following locally grown menu items for 2013-2014 school year: Black Eyed Peas, Watermelons, Apples, Sweet Potatoes, Greens, Cabbage, Butternut Squash, Beets, Grapefruit, Oranges, Red Potatoes, Cream Peas and Peaches.

LONG-TERM VISION

For us long term is 5 years and beyond. In five years, we would like to see a thriving farm to school program. For us thriving would be defined as:

- A farm to school culture which is fully embedded into the overall wellness policies and Coordinated School Health of the school district,
- A farm to school culture which offer Cafeteria Menu offerings which reflect a wide-variety of locally produced foods which students enjoy eating;
- A farm to school culture which benefits the local economy and meets county-wide health objectives;
- A farm to school culture which is reflected in a robust school garden program integrated into core subject areas.

NEAR-TERM GOALS & OBJECTIVES

For us, near term is within the next two school years (2013-2014 and 2014-2015). We have several near term goals and objectives.

Our first goal is to bring awareness to the Farm to School program and the availability of locally grown produce. To meet this goal, Dallas ISD Farm to School has developed Harvest of the Month. Harvest of the Month is a marketing and public awareness campaign targeted to students, staff and parents to bring awareness to Farm to School and the availability of locally grown produce. We have completed a marketing and outreach plan for this initiative which has already been implemented for the 2013-2014 school year. The following objectives have been met for the 2013-2014 school year and would continue into the 2014-2015 school year:

- Determine what foods grow locally and when they are harvested and available and create a *Harvest of the Month Calendar and Plan*.
- Create a *Harvest of the Month Outreach Plan* which coordinates activities, materials and resources resulting in a unified and comprehensive message;
- Procure 100% locally grown produce to meet the monthly demands of the designated Harvest of the Month items. (Department of Defense Fresh; TSD Distributing)

- Create *Harvest of the Month Marketing Materials* which reinforce the message of Harvest of the Month. Materials will include posters, table tents, stickers, farmer profiles, flyers, etc.
- Implement *Harvest of the Month* activities such as Tasty Teasers, featuring HOM menu items, recipe contest, etc.
- Annual participation in *Farm Day at the Fair* for 2nd, 3rd and 4th graders in eligible Dallas ISD schools during National Farm to School Month.

In addition to the above objectives, the following would be newly introduced for the 2014-2015 school year and beyond:

- Partner with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services (or other higher learning institution) to develop specific *Harvest of the Month Curriculum* for classroom teachers.
- Development and implementation of “Farm to School” video series which bring farmers, school gardens and other Farm to School activities to the classrooms.

Our second goal is to **increase the number of servings of locally grown and/or produced food which are served in the school cafeteria**. Our third goal is to **increase the amount of dollars spent on locally grown and/or produced food**. We have identified that in the 2012-2013 school year, over 39,000,000 servings of locally procured food (including milk) was served in the cafeteria. We have identified that in the 2012-2013 school year, over \$9 million was spent on locally grown and/or produced food. This number includes milk and bread products as well as fresh produce. Objectives to increase the amount of servings and the dollars spent on locally produced and/or grown food are:

- Procure 100% local produce for Harvest of the Month featured items for Tasty Teasers.
- Increase utilization of DoD Fresh program for Harvest of the Month items.
- Identify potential growers who can meet Dallas ISD produce and other local food needs.

Our fourth goal is to **increase student awareness and knowledge about gardening and school gardens**. Activities and objectives for this goal are:

- Create a web-based school garden portal for Dallas ISD teachers
- Identify best practices, resources and sustainability guidelines to be included in a district-wide School Garden portal during 2014-2015 school year.
- Create a “grow” calendar which complements the Harvest of the Month calendar and provide other activity resources for aligning gardens with Farm to School.

Our last goal is to **identify more local farmers and producers willing and able to provide product to Dallas ISD**. To meet this goal, Dallas ISD will work with county extension offices and local organizations (GROW North Texas; Texas Organic Farmers and Growers Association) to identify farmers and producers who can meet GAP criteria and desire to work with current Dallas ISD

wholesaler (Hardies Fruit and Vegetable Company) and Dallas ISD distributor (TSD). The following objectives will be met:

- Provide projected product types and quantities of products needed for upcoming school year to farmers/producers;
- Coordinate at least 3 farmer informational meeting and administer Farmer Interest survey.
- Connect farmers to schools through field trips, farmer visits, etc.
- Identify and/or recruit farmers to Hardies Greener Fields Together program to assist with meeting Farm Safety guidelines and completing outside audit portion of certification.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT & STUDENT POPULATION

The Dallas Independent School District (ISD) is an urban school district which has an enrollment of over 157,000 students with 87% of the enrollment qualifying for free and/or reduced price meals. The three top demographics of Dallas ISD include 69% Hispanic, 24.4% Black, and 4.6% White.

Dallas ISD elementary schools were recognized in the 2011-2012 school year as meeting the *Healthier U.S. School Challenge* and 92 applications were submitted this year. Dallas ISD has approximately 36 schools with gardens on site being used to enhance existing classroom curriculum, but typically most students do not garden outside of school.

PRCOOGRAM CONTEXT

Dallas ISD has numerous projects in place which support F2S initiatives. Dallas ISD has approximately 40 schools with gardens on site and/or with gardens being planned; Dallas ISD participates in the *Chef's Move to Schools* initiative and also has participated in the *Texas Farm to School Commodity Program* for several years. Seventy-three of our campuses participate in the *USDA Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program* where students have the opportunity to experience fresh fruits and veggies. Dallas ISD believes these programs need to be more closely integrated with one another in order for students to receive the highest benefit of consuming locally grown/produced food. Additionally, we need to incorporate a robust evaluation and assessment process to measure our success and the true benefit.

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Currently, Dallas ISD participates in the National School Lunch Program including the Breakfast program. In 2011, Dallas ISD started out with the Wal-Mart grant through Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom to implement Breakfast in the Classroom in about fifteen schools, which then grew to sixty. In November 2012, the Dallas ISD Board of Regents voted to make breakfast-in-the-classroom mandatory district-wide. In 2013-2014 all of the elementary schools will have breakfast-in-the-classroom. By 2015-2016 all schools, including all high schools, should have Breakfast in the Classroom implemented. During the 2012-2013 school year, Dallas ISD became an approved CACFP sponsor and began offering the option of snacks and/or suppers to campuses which offered

afterschool programming. As mentioned, approximately 87% of all Dallas ISD students are eligible for free and reduced priced meals.

STATE AND LOCAL INITIATIVES

Currently, the Dallas ISD is in the process of approving and adopting a new comprehensive Wellness Policy. This will directly impact Farm to School and how it can be implemented throughout the district. Additionally, in the past year, a comprehensive Dallas County Plan for Eradication of Childhood Obesity by 2020 (Dallas Charting the Course) was created by collaboration between United Way of Metropolitan Dallas and the Dallas Regional Chamber of Commerce. The role of schools in this plan is paramount and is centered on wellness policies, participation in federally funded programs, and nutrition education. Two key strategies of this plan are complimentary to Farm to School initiatives and include:

- Focus on Schools: Support and assist Dallas County independent school districts to comprehensively integrate Coordinated School Health and implement a Texas Educational Agency adopted Coordinated School Health curriculum. Engage child care and out-of-school time programs to implement extension and complementary programs, as well as elements of the adopted curriculum.
- Good Food Access: Provide access to healthy foods and quality, affordable, fresh produce in Dallas County schools, neighborhoods and communities.

Because of these strategies, the Charting the Course team is very interested in becoming more involved in the Dallas ISD Farm to School initiatives and are supportive of providing resources such as volunteers for conducting taste tests and assessments of taste tests.

On the state level, Texas has been pro-active in passing more stringent competitive food policies for schools and has been ahead of federal policies. Additionally, the Texas Hunger Initiative based in Waco, Texas serves as an advocacy and education group which promotes access to healthy foods. They have begun launching local offices and have assisted in launching local coalitions which also support food access, including promoting urban agriculture. In Dallas, this group is called the Dallas Coalition for Hunger Solutions and they have targeted their areas of focus as being Urban Agriculture, the reduction of Food Deserts, and increased access to federal-funded and non-federally funded nutrition programs.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION

With the anticipated adoption of a more robust district wide Wellness Policy and the new implementation of Farm to School, we expect to see a natural progression of Farm to School

becoming well-integrated into wellness policies and our Coordinated School Health program. In order to ensure the sustainability of Farm to School and to cement it into the district culture, we will:

- Utilize current procurement procedures and models which embrace procurement of locally grown fruits, vegetables and other products such as utilizing DoD Fresh to purchase local produce; utilizing established relationships with local farmers through our current distributor/wholesaler.
- Establish specific language in future IFB around geographic preference and/or establish a system for documenting origin of products to ensure products are purchased locally when feasible and/or available.
- Create buy-in and awareness of local foods from students, parents, teachers and school leadership through Harvest of the Month promotional materials and activities such as taste tests, field trips and nutrition education materials.
- Establish relationships with local farmers/producers so that farmers are aware of Dallas ISD Farm to School initiatives and Dallas ISD is aware of farmers desires and needs as well.
- Engage parent and student support for the Farm to School movement through volunteer recruitment, and opportunities that allow families to incorporate Farm to School foods, recipes and purchasing practices at home.

RESOURCES

- » [USDA Farm to School Team 2010 Summary Report](#), from the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS) – A summary of lessons learned from 15 farm to school site visits made by USDA staff in 2010.
- » [Farm to School Site Visits](#), from FNS and AMS – Brief profiles of farm to school programs in various stages of development.
- » [Farm to School Toolkit](#), from the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition – Resources for starting a farm to school program for school food professionals, producers, and distributors. Don't miss the [Toolkit Resource Guide](#).
- » [Vermont Farm to School: A Guide for Farm to School Community Action Planning](#), from Vermont Food Education Every Day (VT FEED) - Detailed information on forming a farm to school team, facilitating farm to school meetings, and developing a community action plan.
- » [Farm to School Assessment Tool](#), from the Minnesota Department of Health – A checklist for schools to evaluate their current Farm to School efforts.
- » [State Farm to School Legislation](#), from the National Farm to School Coalition – A State-by-State listing of farm to school-related State laws.
- » [Local Wellness Policy Resources](#), from USDA's Team Nutrition – Information to help schools make and maintain a healthy nutrition environment.
- » [Farm to School: A Selected and Annotated Bibliography](#), from the National Agricultural Library – An annotated listing of farm to school documentation from peer reviewed literature databases, organizational Web sites, report citations, conference proceedings, Cooperative Extension Service

publications, and more. Don't miss the section titled "Farm to School How-To and other Resource Guides."

- » [Tips for Writing Goals and Objectives](#), from Tulane University – Just as described, tips for how to write broad goals and specific, measurable objectives.

Farm to School Goals & Objectives Worksheet

Goals	Objectives	Responsible Party	Target Date	Deliverable	Evaluation
Goal #1 Bring awareness to the Farm to School program and the availability of locally grown produce.	Objective #1 for Goal #1 Determine what foods grow locally and when they are harvested and available and create a <i>Harvest of the Month Calendar and Plan</i> .	Food and Child Nutrition Services department. (Menu Planning and Marketing)	Completed June 2013 for 2013-2014 school year. June 2014 for 2014-2015 school year. June 2015 for 2015-2016 school year.	Harvest of the Month Plan and Calendar. <i>See attached.</i>	Students complete Dallas ISD Farm to School Student Survey at beginning and end of school year beginning with 2014-2015 school year.
	Objective #2 for Goal #1 Create a <i>Harvest of the Month Marketing and Outreach Plan</i> which coordinates activities, materials and resources resulting in a unified and comprehensive message.	Food and Child Nutrition Services department (Marketing)	Completed July 2013 for 2013-2014 school year. July 2014 for 2014-2015 school year. July 2015 for 2015-2016 school year.	Harvest of the Month Marketing and Outreach Plan. <i>See attached.</i>	Students complete Dallas ISD Farm to School Student Survey at beginning and end of school year beginning with 2014-2015 school year.
	Objective #3 for Goal #1 Procure 100% locally grown produce to meet the monthly demands of the designated Harvest of the Month items. (DoD Fresh program; TSD Distributing)	Food and Child Nutrition Services department (Procurement)	Completed June 2013 for 2013-2014 school year. June 2014 for 2014-2015 school year. June 2015 for 2015-2016 school year.	See attached Harvest of the Month plan designated growers for produce.	
	Objective #4 for Goal #1 Create <i>Harvest of the Month</i> marketing materials such as posters, table tents, F2S stickers, recipe cards, information/activity sheets, etc.	Food and Child Nutrition Services department (Marketing and Hardie's Fruit and Vegetable Co.)	Completed September 2013 for 2013-2014 school year. August 2014 for 2014-2015 school year. August 2015 for 2015-2016 school year.	Harvest of the Month Marketing materials. <i>See attached Harvest of the Month marketing materials.</i>	Students complete Dallas ISD Farm to School Student Survey at beginning and end of school year beginning with 2014-2015 school year.
	Objective #5 for Goal #1 Implement <i>Harvest of the Month</i> activities	Food and Child Nutrition Services department.	Start September 2013 thru June 2014 for 2013-2014 school year.		Students complete Dallas ISD Farm to School Student

	by introducing Tasty Teasers, promotional materials, and featuring items on the cafeteria menu, recipe contest, etc.		See attached HOM Marketing Plan. Start September 2014 for 2014-2015 school year. Start September 2015 for 2015-2016 school year.		Survey at beginning and end of school year beginning with 2014-2015 school year.
	Objective #6 for Goal #1 Participate in <i>Farm Day at the Fair</i> during National Farm to School Month.	Food and Child Nutrition Services department. Dallas ISD Transportation Department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services	Completed October 2013 for 2013-2014 school year. October 2014 for 2014-2015 school year. October 2015 for 2015-2016 school year.		Students complete Dallas ISD Farm to School Student Survey at beginning and end of school year beginning with 2014-2015 school year.
	Objective #7 for Goal #1 Partner with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services (or other higher learning institution) to develop specific <i>Harvest of the Month</i> nutrition education curriculum for classroom teachers.	Food and Child Nutrition Services department and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services	September 2015 for 2015-2016 school year.	Harvest of the Month curriculum.	Students complete Dallas ISD Farm to School Student Survey at beginning and end of school year beginning with 2014-2015 school year.
	Objective #8 for Goal #1 Development and implementation of "Farm to School" video series which visually capture farmers, school garden projects and other Farm to School activities on film and bring them to the classrooms.	Food and Child Nutrition Services department and Dallas ISD Marketing department	September 2015 for 2015-2016 school year.	Farm to School Video Series.	Students complete Dallas ISD Farm to School Student Survey at beginning and end of school year beginning with 2014-2015 school year.
Goals	Objectives	Responsible Party	Target Date	Deliverable	Evaluation
Goal #2 Increase the	Objective #1 for Goals #2 and #3	Food and Child Nutrition Services	Ongoing. Began with 2013-2014		Dallas ISD FCNS Survey is

<p>number of servings of locally grown, produced foods served in school cafeteria.</p> <p>Goal #3 Increase the amount of dollars spent on locally grown and/or produced food.</p>	<p>Procure 100% local produce for Harvest of the Month featured items Tasty Teasers</p>	<p>department (Procurement); TSD Distributing; Hardies</p>	<p>implementation of Harvest of the Month.</p>		<p>administered annually at end of school year beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.</p>
	<p>Objective #2 for Goals #2 and #3 Increase utilization of DoD Fresh program for Harvest of the Month items.</p>	<p>Food and Child Nutrition Services department (Procurement)</p>	<p>Ongoing. Began in April 2013 with the first orders of produce for 2013-2014 SY</p>		<p>Dallas ISD Monthly Local Food Purchasing Record completed monthly beginning with the 2014-2015 school year.</p>
	<p>Objective #3 for Goals #2 and #3 Identify potential growers who can meet Dallas ISD produce needs and begin utilizing them to supply produce.</p>	<p>TSD Distributing; Hardie's Fruit and Vegetable Co.; GROW North Texas; TDA; Texas AgriLife</p>	<p>Ongoing. Started reaching out to farmers during 2012-2013 SY with Sides Peas; Setting up Farmer meetings beginning in September 2013.</p>		<p>Administer Farmer Interest survey.</p>
<p>Goal #4 Increase student awareness and knowledge about gardening and school gardens.</p>	<p>Objective #1 for Goal #4 Create a web-based School Garden for Dallas ISD teachers.</p>	<p>Dallas ISD IT and/or outside organization</p>	<p>January 2015</p>	<p>Web based School Garden portal</p>	<p>Administer Cornell Garden Based Learning Post Test for Children and Youth to students beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.</p>
	<p>Objective #2 for Goal #4 Identify school garden resources, best practices and sustainability guidelines to be included in a district wide School Garden portal</p>	<p>Dallas F2S Steering Committee and Advisory Board; REAL School Gardens; Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services; GROW North Texas</p>	<p>January 2015</p>	<p>List of resources, best practices and guidelines for school gardens</p>	

Goals	Objectives	Responsible Party	Target Date	Deliverable	Evaluation
	Objective #3 for Goal #4 Create a “grow” calendar which complements the Harvest of the Month calendar and provide other activity resources for aligning gardens with F2S.	Dallas F2S Steering Committee and Advisory Board; REAL School Gardens; Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services; GROW North Texas	January 2015	Grow Calendar	
Goal #5 Identify more local farmers and producers willing and able to provide product for Dallas ISD.	Objective #1 for Goal #5 Provide projected type and quantities of products needed for upcoming school year	Dallas ISD FCNS Procurement and Menu Planning	January 2014 for 2014-2015 school year; January 2015 for 2015-2016 school year	Projections of types of produce and quantities for upcoming school year.	
	Objective #2 for Goal #5 Coordinate farmer informational meetings and administer farmer interest surveys	GROW North Texas; Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service; Hardies	At least 3X each calendar year beginning with January 2014.	Sign in sheets from meetings	Administer Dallas ISD Farmer Interest Survey to farmers throughout school year.
	Objective #3 related to Goal #5 Determine farmer interest and connect farmers with schools through field trips, farmer visits, etc.	GROW North Texas; Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service; Hardies	At least 3X each calendar year beginning with January 2014		
	Objective #4 related to Goal #5 Identify and/or recruit farmers to participate in Hardies Greener Fields Together program.	GROW North Texas; Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service; Hardies	Every six months beginning June 2014.		Administer Dallas ISD Farmer Interest Survey to farmers throughout school year; Farmers complete Hardies Greener Fields Together Safety Questionnaire before participating in GFT.

Local Foods Procurement

BACKGROUND AND PROGRESS TO DATE

Dallas ISD was able to determine that for the 2012-2013 school year, \$78,700 was spent on Texas Farm to School produce, \$325,377 was spent on produce through TSD Distributing, \$721,993 on bakery goods produced locally, and approximately \$8,000,000 on local dairy through Borden's. Including dairy products, we have determined that based on an average portion cost of \$.23 Dallas ISD has served 39,682,916 servings of locally produced items. Moving forward we are working with all our vendors to identify produce items we purchase are local and tracking those purchases. In 2012-2013 these items were:

- Green Leaf Lettuce
- Romaine Lettuce
- Curly Spinach
- Grape Tomatoes
- Tomatoes
- Carrots

Dallas ISD Farm to School will be putting its focusing on increasing local procurement around fresh produce. This will be accomplished through identifying fruits and vegetables grown in Texas and designating these items as Harvest of the Month featured items. These items will be used in taste tests, "Tasty Teasers" and also featured on the cafeteria menus.

The following items were identified as being seasonally available in Texas and able to be reasonably sourced either through DoD Fresh or through our local distributor. These items will appear as Harvest of the Month selections and/or as cafeteria menu options:

- Pinto Beans (September)
- Watermelon (September)
- Apples (October)
- Sweet Potatoes (November; January)
- Greens: Collard, Mustard and Turnip (November)
- Cabbage: Red and Green (December)
- Butternut Squash (January)
- Beets (January)
- Red Grapefruit (February)
- Oranges (March)
- Red Potatoes (April)
- Cream Peas (May)
- Peaches (June)

By using both the DoD Fresh sources and our distributor we will source local first and supplement with other producers if the demand exceeds the local supply. A new local producer, Sides Peas, has been identified for September pinto beans and for May cream peas. The steering committee has also reviewed the Harvest of the Month list and created a list to correspond with local seasonal items grown in school garden.

LONG TERM VISION

For us long term is 5 years and beyond. In five years, we would like to see a thriving farm to school program. Regarding procurement, thriving would be:

- A farm to school culture which offer Cafeteria Menu offerings which reflect a wide-variety of locally produced foods which students enjoy eating;
- A farm to school culture which benefits the local economy and meets county-wide health objectives;

We are working with all our vendors to identify and source more local foods. Our new bakery supply contract (Kruz) company is now baking all products in Texas and our dairy vendor has the majority of its suppliers in Texas. We are also working with our produce distributor, TSD, and our primary produce wholesaler, Hardies, to identify local items and suppliers.

NEAR TERM GOALS

Our primary goal is to **increase the amount of dollars spent on locally grown and/or produced food**. We have identified that in the 2012-2013 school year, over 39,000,000 servings of locally procured food (including milk) was served in the cafeteria. We have identified that in the 2012-2013 school year, over \$9 million was spent on locally grown and/or produced food. This number includes milk and bread products as well as fresh produce. Objectives to increase the amount of servings and the dollars spent on locally produced and/or grown food are:

- Procure 100% local produce for Harvest of the Month featured items for Tasty Teasers.
- Increase utilization of DoD Fresh program for Harvest of the Month items.
- Identify potential growers who can meet Dallas ISD produce and other local food needs.

One of our F2S team members, GROW North Texas is also collaborating with Hardie's Fruit and Vegetable Company to educate farmers about acceptable agricultural practices and the opportunity to partner with Dallas ISD through its Farm to School initiative.

DEFINITION OF "LOCAL" OR "REGIONAL"

Working with the Texas Department of Agriculture we have identified local as being grown or processed in Texas. Regional has been defined as grown or processed in a neighboring state.

Local or regional agricultural products

Because Texas is such a large geographical area with a variety of climates and terrain, we have access to a wide variety of locally produced food. Because Texas is such a large geographical area, it is also a challenge to identify local farmers and develop relationships with these farmers.

The following items are grown/produced in Texas and we are working to identify reliable and affordable local sources for these possible products:

Greens: Collard, Mustard, Turnip, Kale, Spinach, Chards; Beets; Brussels Sprouts; Strawberries; Blueberries; Lettuces: Red Leaf, Green Leaf, Romaine; Potatoes; Summer Squash; Winter Squash; Tomatoes: Cherry, hot house tomatoes, plum tomatoes, roma tomatoes, slicing tomatoes; Peaches; Figs; Onions; Cabbage: Red, Green; Watermelons, Cantaloupe; Honeydew Melon; Pumpkins; Peppers; Okra; Mushrooms; Cucumbers; Sweet Potatoes; Grapefruit; Oranges; Green Peas; Black Eyed Peas; Radishes; Cilantro; Corn; Green Beans; Blackberries; Basil; Artisan Cheeses; Milk; Yogurt; Bakery Items; Chickens; Eggs; Beef; Pork; Pecans; Honey; Syrup;

SOURCING & PROCUREMENT

sourcing suppliers, contracts, and procurement system

We currently have a contract with a milk supplier and a bread supplier which are local companies. The vast majority of our milk and bread items come from these two contracts. These two combined contracts total over \$8,700,000 in local food items. We are also actively working with our current produce distributor and wholesaler to identify products which we may already be sourcing locally and to find NEW local sources for other products.

Suppliers

We are actively working with our produce distributor (TSD Produce) to source more locally grown foods. They in turn are actively setting up programs to obtain more locally grown produce. Our primary wholesaler, Hardies Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Company has initiated a program called Greener Fields Together which is a program to advance sustainability from seed to fork. This program helps to identify farmers who are interested in partnering with schools and assisting them with becoming certified. The steps include:

- Farmer completes application
- Farmer agrees to get liability insurance
- Complete safety questionnaire

- Attend farmer training
- Farmer prepares for audit
- Hardies pays for an independent audit
- Farmer becomes certified

Procurement rules

We are a Federal Program and must follow all guidelines set forth in Federal School Lunch purchasing guidelines. \$10,000 is our threshold and anything we purchase exceeds that amount so all items are competitively bid.

Mechanisms for Local Sourcing

Incidentally/Accidentally

Dairy and bakery items

By including local sourcing in your solicitation for a distributor

We will include in future bids a question about the origin of the product. We will also work with vendors to source more local products.

Through Texas Farm to School Program

We use commodity dollars with the Texas Farm to School Program to obtain local produce. We will increase purchases from this program next year (2013-2014 SY).

DELIVERY, PROCESSING & STORAGE

We will continue to use existing delivery methods but may increase value added services from our produce vendor.

KEY PLAYERS

We hired a contractor (Sonia White) to oversee the planning and the Directors of Nutrition and Procurement are both involved. The Texas Department of Agriculture has also had personnel on our planning team. Our distributor, TSD and primary wholesaler, Hardies Fruit and Vegetable Company, also are key players in our plan and decision making.

TRAINING NEEDS

USDA has provided all needed tools to start the program.

RESOURCES

- » [Program-specific procurement regulations](#), from USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) – Links to regulations governing each major Child Nutrition Program from Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations.
- » [Final Rule: Geographic Preference Option](#), from FNS – The final rule, published in the Federal Register, includes a summary, background, and final regulatory language, by program, for the geographic preference option.
- » [Procurement Geographic Preference Q&As Part I](#), from FNS's Child Nutrition Division – A memo published in February 2011 addressing questions regarding application of the geographic preference option.
- » [Procurement Geographic Preference Q&As Part II](#), from FNS's Child Nutrition Division – A memo published in October 2012 addressing additional questions regarding application of the geographic preference option and other mechanisms for local procurement.
- » [State Agency Guidance on Procurement](#), from FNS in partnership with the National Food Service Management Institute – An online procurement training geared towards State agencies that focuses on Federal procurement requirements.
- » [USDA Farm to School Team 2010 Summary Report](#), from the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS) – A summary of lessons learned from 15 farm to school site visits made by USDA staff in 2010. Don't miss the section on procurement (p.28).
- » [A School's Guide to Purchasing Washington-Grown Food](#), from the Washington State Department of Agriculture – This straightforward, clearly worded, resource-filled guide provides information on using the geographic preference option to source local foods in Washington State; however, much of the content is broadly applicable.
- » [School Food Learning Lab in Saint Paul, Minnesota: A Case Study of Procurement Change in Action](#), from School Food Focus – Provides a detailed account of how one Minnesota school district developed and pursued their goals for procurement change, including increasing their local foods purchases.
- » [Frozen Local: Strategies for Freezing Locally Grown Produce for the K-12 Marketplace](#), from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy – Presents research and insights on avenues for freezing local foods on a small to medium scale.
- » [Getting Started – Farmer Self-Assessment](#), from Michigan State University – A self assessment worksheet for farmers to determine their interest in and readiness for selling their products to schools.
- » [Selling to Schools & Institutions](#), from Food Hub's Knowledge Base – Resources for farmers on how to get started selling foods to schools.
- » [How to Start the Conversation: A Food Service Director & Farmer Conversation Guide](#), from the California Farm to School Taskforce – A detailed list of questions for food service staff to ask farmers as they begin the conversation about procuring the farmer's products.

Menu Planning

BACKGROUND AND PROGRESS TO DATE

The Farm to School Steering Committee began researching the potential for implementing a Harvest of the Month program to promote Farm to School during the spring of 2013. In partnership with our produce distributor, TSD Distributing, the menu planning team was able to identify 2012-2013 produce purchases which were being procured locally and regularly on the cafeteria menu. These items were:

- Green Leaf Lettuce
- Romaine Lettuce
- Curly Spinach
- Grape Tomatoes
- Tomatoes
- Carrots

Additionally the menu team developed a list of seasonal items to launch our first Harvest of the Month initiative for the 2013-2014 school year. The following items were identified as being seasonally available in Texas and able to be reasonably sourced either through DoD Fresh or through our local distributor. These items will appear as Harvest of the Month selections and/or as cafeteria menu options:

- Pinto Beans (September)
- Watermelon (September)
- Apples (October)
- Sweet Potatoes (November; January)
- Greens: Collard, Mustard and Turnip (November)
- Cabbage: Red and Green (December)
- Butternut Squash (January)
- Beets (January)
- Red Grapefruit (February)
- Oranges (March)
- Red Potatoes (April)
- Cream Peas (May)
- Peaches (June)

By using both the DoD Fresh sources and our distributor we will source local first and supplement with other producers if the demand exceeds the local supply. A new local producer, Sides Peas, has been identified for September pinto beans and for May cream peas. The steering committee has also reviewed the Harvest of the Month list and created a list to correspond with local seasonal items

grown in school garden. Recipe testing for the Harvest of the Month items is scheduled for June and July 2013.

One of our goals is to **increase the number of servings of locally grown and/or produced food which are served in the school cafeteria.** We have identified that in the 2012-2013 school year, over 39,000,000 servings of locally procured food (including milk) was served in the cafeteria. This number includes milk and bread products as well as fresh produce. Objectives to increase the amount of servings of locally produced and/or grown food are:

- Procure 100% local produce for Harvest of the Month featured items for Tasty Teasers.
- Increase utilization of DoD Fresh program for Harvest of the Month items.
- Identify potential growers who can meet Dallas ISD produce and other local food needs.

BUDGETING & FORECASTING

Harvest of the Month items will be purchased through the produce bid or as part of the Texas Farm to School program using PAL dollars. The first Harvest of the Month, pinto beans, is a fresh frozen item that will be delivered directly to the Dallas ISD warehouse and then as an extra step, delivered to the schools. Usually most fresh items are delivered directly to the schools by TSD Distributing. Fresh pinto beans are a new item on the cycle menu and we will use the fresh frozen as a featured limited time item due to both the extra cost and an extra step in delivery. Both Texas Farm to School and purchased item are typically delivered directly to the school.

Harvest of the Month will include a taste test, "Tasty Teaser" at all elementary and middle schools. Taste testing has been done in the past and is already a part of the Nutrition Education activities.

One factor that will influence the amount of local produce we purchase will be student acceptance and preference. For example, if students prefer and consume more of the fresh frozen pinto beans than the canned pinto beans, we would decide if it is worth additional cost and effort to provide that item. Each item needs to be evaluated individually.

We met with our produce distributor and expressed our desire to buy local when it is available. They in turn developed a Local Produce School Calendar which features local farmers, products available and when they are available. We projected volumes for the Harvest of the Month items and shared these with our producers in order for them to meet our demand. The direct wholesaler, Hardie's Fruit and Vegetable Co, who is the primary supply for TSD will also produce some promotional items. These items will include posters, bookmarks, stickers and possible farmer trading cards.

MENU AND RECIPE DEVELOPMENT

Dallas ISD Food and Child Nutrition Services use a two week cycle menu for elementary campuses and one week for high school with multiple choices in all categories. Each year we develop new recipes to offer the students. It usually takes the students a while to try all the new items because of

the number of choices. That is why taste tests are so important. An example of when taste tests have been successful is in the case with broccoli raisin salad. When it was first introduced few students selected the salad, but after offering opportunities for sampling the item, selection and consumption improved.

Because the cycle menu is planned annually, locally grown items will not always be available. In order to take advantage of more local, we will need to have two or three seasonal cycle menus. This will be possible with the Harvest of the Month program and the seasonal cycle menus will be planned around the Harvest of the Month seasonal selections.

We have been using fresh carrots both raw and cooked that are grown locally. Other local items used on the menu during the 2012-2013 school year are lettuce, spinach, tomatoes, bread and milk. For the 2013-2014 school year, the following locally procured items will appear on the menu and/or as a Harvest of the Month selection: Black Eyed Peas, Watermelons, Apples, Sweet Potatoes, Greens, Cabbage, Butternut Squash, Beets, Grapefruit, Oranges, Red Potatoes, Cream Peas and Peaches. Several of our Farm to School Steering Committee members, Texas AgriLife, GROW North Texas and The Gleaning Network of Texas have begun conversations with farmers about meeting the need and meeting the requirements of the wholesalers (Hardie's) and the distributor (TSD).

We will continue to develop new recipes for Harvest of the Month and test with children throughout the school year so new menu items can be added to the 2014-2015 menus.

SERVICE & PROMOTION

Farm to School Harvest of the Month will be promoted in several ways including printed bookmarks, Know Your Farmer video clips to be shown on monitors in the dining room, farmer visits to schools, Chef/RD demonstrations, and district web page.

The menu will be themed Know Your Food; Grow with School Meals with picture of a farm stand. High schools will try self-service of vegetables and fruits and a condiment bar.

ASSESSMENT & ADJUSTMENT

During the 2012-2013 school year several plate waste studies were conducted and the results of these studies will serve as a base line of determining student consumption of vegetables. The results of these studies should be available during the first part of the 2013-2014 school year. Experience and information gained on recipe development and taste tests of local items will also be used to identify items to be added to the 2014-2015 menu.

We will also be implementing a student survey, (Dallas ISD Farm to School Survey) during the 2014-2015 which will assess students' familiarity and preferences for fruits and vegetables. This evaluation data can also be used to determine decisions for menu planning.

Foods for taste test will be prepared at the campus level or by the central kitchen. The cafeteria staff will conduct the taste tests and collect comment cards. Additionally some student surveys (Cafeteria

Recall Survey) will be distributed and collected at some campuses. This feedback will be used for menu planning as well.

RESOURCES

- » Dallas ISD Chef/RD Demonstration Outline, developed in-house by Dallas ISD FCNS to be used for Chef/RD demonstrations.
- » Harvest of the Month Tasty Teasers Procedures, developed in-house by Dallas ISD FCNS to be used for HOM taste tests.
- » The Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs, from USDA's Food and Nutrition Service – A guide (updated to reflect the new meal patterns) meant to help SFAs determine how much food to purchase and how to prepare it.
- » First Choice: A Purchasing Systems Manual for School Food Service, from the National Food Service Management Institute – Includes a section on menu systems and planning.
- » Menu Planning Resources, from the Food and Nutrition Service's Healthy Meals Resource System – A compilation of menu planning tools, fact sheets, guides, and more.
- » Recommended Kitchen Equipment for From-Scratch Cooking, from the Wisconsin Farm to School Program – A list of equipment you might need to start incorporating scratch recipes until menus.
- » A Guide to Taste Testing Local Food in Schools, from Vermont Food Education Every Day (VT FEED) – A comprehensive guide to implementing a taste testing program in your school, including a sample timeline, case studies from taste tests in the cafeteria, classroom, and through afterschool programs.
- » Farm to School Taste Tests in School Cafeterias, from the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Coalition – A quick-start taste-testing guide for chefs, parents, and cafeteria and school staff.
- » Tasting Lesson – Fruits and Vegetables, from the University of Minnesota Extension Program – A sample lesson to that can be offered along with a taste test.
- » Free Tasting Lessons, from Cooking with Kids, Inc. – Free and fun bilingual produce tasting lessons.

Food Safety

BACKGROUND AND PROGRESS TO DATE

Three members of the Farm to School Steering Committee team attended Produce Safety University, a training course for FNS Child Nutrition Program Operations conducted by SUDA Food and Nutrition Service Agricultural Marketing Service held at the National Food Service Management Institute, November 5-9, 2012 in anticipation of receiving the Farm to School Planning Grant. Since that time, members of the F2S Steering Committee have met with the Dallas ISD produce distributor (TSD Distributing) and the produce house (Hardie's Fruit and Vegetable Co.) where they get product to determine the extent of their requirements for farmers and their tracking capability. We have also started conversations with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, the local gleaning network, The Gleaning Network of Texas and GROW North Texas. All of these organizations (all are F2S team members) have relationships with local growers and are in the process of communicating to these farmers about Dallas ISD's Farm to School program and its interest in increasing its use of local produce. The produce warehouse, Hardie's, has also developed a program, Greener Fields Together, which assists with facilitating partnerships between local farmers, distributors and end users. This program has several helpful tools for farmers, such as a Safety Questionnaire which can help a farmer determine next steps to meet local, state and federal safety regulations. Once a farmer is accepted into the program, Hardies will assist with the cost of a required independent audit.

STATE AND LOCAL HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Dallas ISD does not plan to purchase directly from the farm. TSD Distributing delivers product that they buy from Hardie's Fruit and Vegetable Co. Hardie's requires all growers to use good agricultural practices (GAP). Additionally, Hardie's has a new initiative, Greener Fields Together, which has enhanced GAP requirements and certification which they want to introduce to more farmers. This program would better prepare local growers for selling to a wider range of wholesalers and end-users. Hardie's also assists the growers with the cost of an outside auditor to certify the farm. These enhanced practices and certification will include all state and federal regulations including traceability.

FOOD SAFETY IN THE KITCHEN

We do not anticipate changing food preparation at this time. Due to limited freezer space, most local items will need to be fresh and will need to be either refrigerated or held at room temperature before preparation.

Training

We currently conduct Culinary Training which includes proper receiving, storage, handling and preparation of food. We focus on items planned on the menu. Knife skills have been a very popular segment of the training because we use quite a bit of fresh items. Knife skills focus on safety and efficient methods to make work faster and easier.

FOOD SAFETY IN THE SCHOOL GARDEN

We do not plan to use school garden items in the school lunch menu. However, the Harvest of the Month program is planned to coincide with school garden harvest. Currently there are 36 schools in Dallas ISD which have active school gardens. Twenty-two of these gardens are part of the REAL School Gardens program. The RSG program introduces and advocates best practices around food safety in the garden. Part of the short term

goals of our F2S Implementation plan would be to create a web-based portal where school garden best practices could be easily accessible to Dallas ISD teachers. Currently, REAL School Gardens and other recognized school gardening programs such as Junior Master Gardener, Environmental Protection Agency and Gardeners in Community Development take the lead on distributing information to campus gardeners.

Training

There is a training module already developed which has been used in previous years with Dallas ISD teachers. This training was very popular with teachers and the F2S Steering Committee has recently discussed bringing back this training module and offering it once again to Dallas ISD classroom teachers. The module focused on how classroom teachers of all subjects could incorporate the school garden into their daily lessons. See the attached sample module.

FOOD SAFETY ON THE FARM AND DURING TRANSPORT

Since Dallas ISD does not purchase directly from farmers, Dallas ISD relies on TSD Distributing and Hardie's Fruit and Vegetable Co. to ensure that these measures are in place.

Training

As mentioned early, GROW North Texas, The Gleaning Network of Texas and Texas AgriLife is working closely with Hardie's Fruit and Vegetable Co, to conduct an informational session for farmers to introduce Hardie's new program, Greener Fields Together. Multiple meetings are being planned beginning in January 2014, to inform local growers of this program and to recruit more certified producers which follow good agriculture practices including traceability. Hardie's will actually pay certification fees for farmers that participate. GROW North Texas will be working closely with Hardie's to develop a planning packet to share with farmers which will walk them through the certification process and provide resources for the farmers.

TRACEABILITY

Hardie's Fruit and Vegetable Co. maintains traceability on all products.

RESOURCES

- » Greener Fields Together, from Hardies Fruit and Vegetable Company. A program developed to sustain seed to fork best practices and to connect local farmers with end users.
- » Farm to School Food Safety FAQs, from the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service – Answers to common questions about food safety rules, working with local farmers, and handling fresh produce.
- » Produce Safety Resources, from USDA and the National Food Service Management Institute – Includes videos, fact sheets, presentations, and talking points on produce safety topics for school foodservice professionals ranging from schools gardens, to food preparation and handling, to produce quality.
- » Tips, Tools, and Guidelines for Food Distribution and Food Safety, from the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food & Forestry – Provides helpful food safety information on everything from developing a food safety plan, to handling fresh produce, to safely serving produce from the school garden.
- » Best Practices for Handling Fresh Produce in Schools, from USDA and the National Food Service Management Institute – Recommendations for reducing the risks of foodborne illness and minimizing the chances for fruits and vegetables to become contaminated.

- » USDA Good Agricultural Practices Audit Programs, from the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service – Information about USDA's independent voluntary agricultural practice audit program.
- » Good Agricultural Practices and Food Safety, from the Washington Department of Agriculture's Farm to School Program – A compilation of food safety resources, including a Request for Proposals that incorporates food safety specifications.
- » Checklist for Producers Selling Produce to Local K-12 Schools, from the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition – A checklist meant to facilitate communication about farming practices and food safety between farmers and school food service directors.
- » Verifying On-Farm Food Safety Fact Sheet, from USDA and the National Food Service Management, provides tips to help the school foodservice professionals plan and conduct farm visits to discuss food safety practices.
- » Food Safety and Liability Insurance: Emerging Issues for Farmers and Institutions, from the Community Food Security Coalition and USDA's Risk Management Agency – An assessment of the liability coverage held by 25 farmers across the nation and the liability and food safety barriers that small farmers may encounter when selling to schools.
- » Insurance Coverage Options for Fresh Produce Growers, from North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension – A summary of the insurance coverage options available for growers of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Promotion & Outreach

BACKGROUND AND PROGRESS TO DATE

In April 2013, after attending the Farm to School Conference in Washington D.C., the team was inspired to create an outreach and promotion campaign which would better communicate to parents, students, faculty and the community how Dallas ISD was serving locally grown food in the cafeteria. The campaign we developed was “Harvest of the Month”. This campaign was officially launched at the beginning of the 2013-2014 school year, during October (Farm to School Month and National School Lunch Week). A media event was held at the Farm Day at the Fair to announce the program. Over 450 Dallas ISD students attended the event. Specific events around *Harvest of the Month: Harvest of the Month* Kick Off for Farm to School Month/National School Lunch Week: Celebrate Regional Fare (October).

- October 15th: Farm to School Day/Celebrate Regional Fare
- Elementary Students: Will receive Harvest of the Month book marks
- Elementary students will have chance to win fruit or vegetable fun friend during school lunch.
- Middle School Students will have chance to win Harvest of the Month Book Cover
- During school lunch
- Poster promoting Farm to School Day will be posted in cafeteria and in other locations in school.
- Harvest of the Month taste testing will be done on this day.
- October 1- 31: Student Recipe Contest: Explore What Texas Has to Offer. Students will enter their recipes featuring Texas grown produce. School will select their winner. School winner will be submitted to FCNS central office to be considered for the District Contest

OUTREACH

The primary message of our Harvest of the Month initiative is: *Harvest of the Month- Now Serving Locally Grown: Dallas ISD School cafeterias are serving up farm, fresh goodness.* Each month, the *Harvest of the Month* lunch selection will incorporate a locally grown fruit or vegetable. Students will have the opportunity to:

- Taste a variety of regionally grown fruits and vegetables.
- Learn about where their food comes from.
- Discover flavorful, nutritious ways to enjoy fruits and vegetables- both at school and home.

Students

Chef-RD Demo program using Texas Grown produce. —This is a program that will be offered to third and fourth grade students through Dallas ISD FCNS. Chef, registered dietitians, dietetic students and culinary students teach the classes. The purpose of the classes is to: Teach students and parents how to incorporate a variety of vegetables into meals and snacks, using recipes served in school meals as examples and promoting the Harvest of the Month selections. Students learn math skills, facts about Texas farming, nutrition facts and math skills.

Through the Harvest of the Month program, each month a Texas/regionally grown produce item(s) will be featured:

Signage will be posted in the cafeteria highlighting the featured *Harvest of the Month* item(s). Schools will receive educational fun facts which can be shared on morning announcements on *Harvest of the Month* item(s).

- Taste testing of the *Harvest of the Month* Item will be done the second and fourth week of each month. (Exception in September will be done the third and fourth week and in June will be done the first week).
- In elementary school, every student trying the *Harvest of the Month* item will receive a sticker with a photo of the featured item.
- Students will be able to vote for *Harvest of the Month* items would like regularly featured on the school menu

Parents

Dallas ISD Food and Child Nutrition Services are working with the Texas PTA to inform Dallas ISD parents about the Harvest of the Month. We will be announcing our joint promotion that encourages school PTA's to participate in the October Student Recipe Contest-Explore What Texas Has to Offer

Teachers

Education Resources:

- Teachers will receive education fact sheets on the Harvest of the Month item to share with students. Education Fact Sheet will also be available on-line.
- Students will receive farmer trading cards

Harvest of the Month Kick Off for Farm to School Month/National School Lunch Week: Celebrate Regional Fare

- Last Week of September/First Week of October:
- Teachers will receive detailed information on Harvest of the Month program and how they can support the program. As well weekly Farm to School fun facts to share with students all month long based on the Farm to School Month

- Schools will receive Texas Farm to School announcements can read during National School Lunch Week. Announcements will focus on local foods use in school meal program and Texas agriculture facts.

School administrators and board

Currently a new, comprehensive and robust wellness policy is up for approval and adoption. This wellness policy will offer great opportunities for the Farm to School initiatives to be embedded in the Dallas ISD wellness culture. Once this policy is approved, the F2S team will be working closely with school administrators to educate them on how F2S complements the new wellness policy.

Food producers

We are currently planning multiple farmer meetings to let them know about Dallas ISD's Farm to School initiative and the opportunity for them to sell more of their produce to the school district. We are including TSD Distributing and Hardie's Fruit and Vegetable Company in these discussions so they can also share their minimum standards and criteria for selling to them with the farmers. Our meetings are scheduled to begin January 2014 and we will try to have one each quarter following the initial meeting.

Media & Community

Harvest of the Month/District Recipe Contest Event

Will have an event where local chefs and Texas farmers taste and determine the district winners for the Student Chef Recipe Contest. Those selected as district finalists will prepare their dish for the event. District winning recipes will be considered for the menu to be included regularly in the school cafeteria.

Dallas ISD has partnered with Hardie's Fruit and Vegetable Company to produce many of the promotional Harvest of the Month materials and other Farm to School promotional items such as the Farmer Trading Cards. Their generous support came from being involved on our Farm to School discussions of how to engage local farmers. They also have a program "Greener Fields Together" which assist local farmers in becoming compliant and prepared to sell to wholesalers. They are working with our Farm to School team to participate in our farmer meetings and inform them about this program as well.

RESOURCES

- » Dallas ISD Harvest of the Month, developed by Dallas ISD FCNS department and features multiple items for promotions such as line signs, posters, book marks, stickers, and informational sheets about local farmers and their products.

- » National Farm to School Month Resources, from the National Farm to School Network (NFSN) – Every year, schools across the county celebrate National Farm to School Month. The NFSN makes it easy with a host of resources from fun logos to press release templates to daily themes.
- » Promoting Your Farm to School Items, from the University of Minnesota Extension Program – A video geared towards food service directors that addresses promoting farm to school menu items. See also their tips for promoting food.
- » Interview with Communications Consultant Andy Goodman, from the Center for Ecoliteracy – Andy Goodman provides advice on communicating about school lunch initiatives, holding effective focus groups, and choosing the right messages and mediums for communicating with different groups.

Examples of Farm to School Promotional Materials and Websites

- » Farmer Trading Cards, from the Massachusetts Farm to School Project – Reminiscent of baseball cards, these farmer trading cards provide the stats on the local producers who provide food for school meal programs.
- » Local Food is Good Food Poster, from the Massachusetts Farm to School Project – A fun, colorful poster that features local food and local farmers.
- » Harvest of the Month Materials, from Portland Public Schools – Educational and beautifully designed activity sheets and other Harvest of the Month resources.
- » January 2012 Menu, from Minneapolis Public Schools – This beautiful menu and information-rich promotional page show that local foods can be incorporated into delicious menus throughout the year, even as far north as Minneapolis.
- » Meet Your Producers, from Kent School District in Washington State – A great district-level farm to school website that includes an interactive map that allows students and parents to learn more about where their school food comes from.
- » Elementary School Lunch Menu (for parents), from the Berkeley Unified School District – Beautiful monthly menus that include a letter home to parents, the district's wellness policy, recipes, and more.

School Gardens

BACKGROUND AND PROGRESS TO DATE

Currently, Dallas ISD has approximately 36 schools which have school gardens on site. There are several organizations which support these gardens and currently, Dallas ISD does not mandate that a school must adhere and/or use a specific garden curriculum or program. REAL School Gardens (RSG) has 19 Dallas ISD schools in the ground as of June 2013 and 8 scheduled to be installed in 2013-2014 school year. About 20-30 DISD schools apply to RSG each year. RSG interview about 60% of those and select 5-8 each year for partnership. Other curriculum/programs which support school gardens in Dallas ISD are Junior Master Gardener; Environmental Protection Agency Garden; Gardeners In Community Development Garden. Dallas ISD also has 5 schools which are participating in a pilot program called Texas Go! Eat! Grow! which is a study of the effects of interventions such as gardening, nutrition education and physical activities on children's behaviors related to childhood obesity.

One of our goals is to **increase student awareness and knowledge about gardening and school gardens**. Activities and objectives for this goal are:

- Create a web-based school garden portal for Dallas ISD teachers
- Identify best practices, resources and sustainability guidelines to be included in a district-wide School Garden portal during 2014-2015 school year.
- Create a "grow" calendar which complements the Harvest of the Month calendar and provide other activity resources for aligning gardens with Farm to School.

GETTING BUY-IN

Typically, each school currently decides on its own what curriculum and/or support organization it will use to implement gardening at their school. Each organization may have its own criteria for participation and/or its own application process. REAL School Gardens only selects schools that have broad buy-in. The schools must demonstrate this to RSG through the application and interview process. RSG does not generate the buy-in for a school garden, rather RSG responds to the demand for school gardens and selects only the schools which RSG think will have long-term success.

PLANNING & DESIGN

Goals and end uses

The Dallas ISD Farm to School Plan would encourage schools to implement school gardening and to seek the support of an experienced partner such as REAL School Gardens or Junior Master Gardener. We will probably allocate a specific amount to supporting the development and implementation of school gardens and establish some minimum criteria that a school must follow in order to participate

under the F2S Implementation Grant. Currently the RSG model has a three-year program each school partner completes. RSG can install 10 gardens a year and continue with teacher training for another two. RSG cultivates about 500 square feet for veggies and perennials. This is not a large area for cultivation, but this is a reasonable size for schools to maintain. Ideally the garden space would also have an outdoor classroom with shade, paths, rainwater harvesting, composting, seating, etc. so the cultivated space is not the whole picture.

The RSG model is one which encourages broad-based buy in from its schools, and this is the model which the majority of Dallas ISD schools currently use. RSG has a goal for at least 60% of teachers at each of the partner schools to be using the learning gardens regularly for academic instruction across the subject areas. Students grow potatoes to donate to food pantries before school is out. Students learn soil science and practice their measuring skills; they multiply using basil seeds as manipulatives, use the gardens as a tool to generate descriptive writing, learn conversions and measuring when making recipes in class, and so on and so forth. The entire school community-parents, students, school staff, and the broader community, including corporate partners-participate in the construction of the garden, and school staff, students, parents, and friends from the neighborhood all help to maintain the garden. Each school starts a garden club and a garden committee to oversee regular use. It is anticipated that all 250 square feet (approximate) are used to produce vegetables in cool seasons and warm season, with the remaining 250 square feet supporting perennials and native Texas plants.

Sizes and sites

RSG currently work with the DISD central office staff-buildings and grounds-to select a site that has water, light, proper drainage, accessibility, no major bond plans for construction, no hidden wires, pipes, or lines, etc. RSG also try to find a spot on the school grounds that already get foot traffic and try to avoid putting gardens too close to playgrounds and basketball courts, etc. because of the noise that is created during instruction. Soil quality does vary from site to site. We amend soil and bring in additional soil for raised beds.

Layout, soil, and garden beds

Gardens vary from school to school based on the school's input, needs and the program/curriculum supporting the garden. Some have raised beds for younger students. Most schools assign beds to grade levels. Younger students may grow "Peter Rabbit" gardens or other themes. Ideally, the perimeter of the garden beds would be maximized so children can gather around, and try not to make beds too wide so that little people can't access them for maintenance and harvesting, etc.

Since Dallas ISD school gardens are supported by multiple programs and curriculum a combination of seeding techniques and types of beds are used.

Most Dallas ISD school gardens typically bring in most of the soil. Schools are trained to compost to keep the soil healthy and also use and alfalfa-based organic fertilizer that is donated. RSG has

worked closely with a local vendor over the last several years to get a vegetable mix that produces healthy vegetables in the first year and RSG gardens do not use chemicals.

Crops and livestock

In North Texas, our cool season starts in September and goes through the early part of the year, depending on frost and protection. RSG provides potatoes and onions for planting mid-February and warm season vegetables go in mid-March. So, we are able to grow crops year-round. Flor de calbasa, three sisters, okra, greens, potatoes are all cultural foods. We also teach the ethno botanical uses of the annual weeds that come in like amaranth, etc. In regard to fruit-bearing trees, RSG plants figs and Mexican plums mostly. Students choose what to plant.

RSG gardens grow Texas native plants to attract birds, bees, butterflies-usually about 250 square feet is dedicated to this. RSG has also supported animals. A couple of RSG school gardens have had chickens on-site.

Greenhouses, hoop houses, and other structures and spaces

Currently, a couple of schools who have gardens have done small hoop houses over their veggie beds, but other than that we typically don't build these structures as we have a pretty long growing season.

All RSG gardens have compost and shade. Often times RSG has to build the shade, but they also plant trees. In the RSG models, boulders, tree cookies, benches and tables are used for seating. Whiteboard have been utilized in shaded areas so teachers have that as a resource. We also provide plant labels for identifying plants and their uses. We make sure there is enough room between beds to mow and edge and the district has requested that we don't use decomposed granite for paths. We take a close look at the gutters for building in rainwater harvesting. We also put in drip irrigation. It doesn't take the place of watering, but it helps in the summer months especially.

Supplies

Using the RSG model, there would be a shed for every school where supplies are stored. Each school would get a wheelbarrow, class sets of trowels, hoses, shovels, spade forks, mattock, etc. Each school gets a kit of instructional supplies with tear-able tape for taping soil samples and leaves, etc. into journals, compost thermometers, soil thermometers, rain gages, atmospheric thermometers, field guides, hand lenses, measuring tape, creature peepers for catch and release, and we provide curriculum across grade levels and subject areas as well.

FUNDING

Typically, RSG asks each school to raise \$500 a year for maintenance and carry over what is not used for longer-term maintenance. Annual costs are minimal as REAL School Gardens provides seeds, transplants, and organic fertilizer each year and many schools have enough compost to keep their soil enriched. Other programs/curriculum have varying costs, but are also reasonable. Some schools have received grants specifically designated to support school gardens.

MAINTENANCE, STAFFING, & TRAINING

Schools apply to the RSG program with a maintenance plan and around 150-300 volunteers participate in the construction of the garden. This allows schools to build excitement and ownership and helps them to get community involved. Each school has a garden club that helps to maintain the garden during the school year and we provide the whole staff with training on “Sustaining the Garden and Teaching Too” so that they know what concepts can be taught when they are composting, pulling weeds, etc. Each school has a summer maintenance plan that works for them, summer school, teachers, custodial staff, parents, neighbors, etc. are the key ingredients at most schools. Most of our schools do have regular workdays, often at the beginning of school and again in the spring.

REAL School Gardens emphasizes and excels at teacher training. Many schools tell us it is the best professional development they have ever received. RSG provides comprehensive, high-touch training to each school staff over the course of a three-year program so that the garden is being used regularly for instruction and is embedded into the learning culture of the school. The training includes administrators, is conducted on-site in each school’s garden and is followed up with model teaching visits that include the teachers’ students. Additional school garden training has been conducted in a full-day Saturday seminar which instructs classroom teachers how to incorporate the school garden into all subjects. The F2S Steering Committee has considered offering this training again during the 2013-2014 school year as part of the F2S initiative.

As an RSG sponsored school garden, the school is trained not to apply chemicals or any other treatments to kill pests. An IPM team at the district is the only entity that should be handling the garden in this way. Schools are trained on safe use of tools, classroom management, types of materials for construction of beds that don’t have harmful chemicals, etc. The F2S Steering Committee also has a committee member, Kim Flynn, who is specifically trained in IPM.

USING GARDEN PRODUCE

In Dallas ISD, school garden produce would not be used in the school cafeteria. It would be offered as samples in the garden or back in the classroom. RSG has documented over 800 pounds of potatoes harvested and donated to local food pantries, schools selling produce at local nurseries and farmers’ markets, tasting foods in the garden, or the classroom. Dallas ISD gardens are well used.

RESOURCES

Dallas ISD will partner with Texas AgriLife to possibly create School Garden Workshops to instruct teachers on how to implement gardening into other subject areas. RSG also provides a long list of resources on the REAL School Gardens website from books to online documents, etc. RSG also produces resources-curricula that are grade level and subject-areas specific aligned to state standards and district scope and sequence. The F2S Steering Committee recognizes that there is a need for a portal which offers school garden best practices, sustainability guidelines and gardening resources. It has been proposed that creating such a portal become one of the over-arching short

term goals for the district. To support our goal to **increase student awareness and knowledge about gardening and school gardens** we will create a district wide school garden portal. Activities to support this are:

- Identify best practices, resources and sustainability guidelines
 - Create a “grow” calendar which complements the Harvest of the Month calendar
 - Provide other activity resources for aligning gardens with Farm to School
-
- » School Garden Q&As: Memo SP 32-2009, from the USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service – This memo clarifies, among other things, that funds from the nonprofit school food service account can be used to purchase seeds and other supplies for starting and maintaining school gardens.
 - » Getting Started: A Guide for Creating School Gardens as Outdoor Classrooms, from the Center for Ecoliteracy – A comprehensive, step-by-step guide to starting a school garden, from selecting and preparing a site, to raising funds, to involving a diverse set of stakeholders.
 - » School Garden Checklist, from Let’s Move – A list of important considerations for starting a garden including site and plant selection, soil health, and design.
 - » Webinar: Design Ideas for a Fun, Successful Instructional School Garden, from LifeLab and the National Farm to School Network – LifeLab Director John Fisher discusses the importance of good garden design and demonstrates many garden design concepts with more than 100 photographs.
 - » Resources for Creating and Sustaining School Gardens, from the California School Garden Network – Free handouts, videos, and other resources, including great information on planning, designing, prepping, seeding, and maintaining a garden.
 - » School Gardening Resources, from KidsGardening, a project of the National Gardening Association – Articles, lesson and activity ideas, classroom projects, and how-to-guides.
 - » The Edible Schoolyard Project, an organization dedicated to building and sharing edible education curricula, supporting an online network and resource center, and offering professional development opportunities.
 - » Growing a Better School Lunch, from Community Blueprint – An inspiring video documenting one of Minnesota’s largest school garden projects, which spans 3.5 acres. About 300 high school students tend a garden that provides fresh food to the school cafeteria, grow food for and operate a community supported agriculture program, and learn valuable lessons.
 - » The USDA People’s Garden Initiative – A collaborative effort of more than 700 local and national organizations all working together to establish community and school gardens across the country.
 - » A Step-by-Step School Garden Guide, from Grow NYC – A checklist for building community support, creating a shared vision, planning and designing the garden, securing materials and supplies, and keeping the garden growing.

Education & Curriculum Integration

BACKGROUND AND PROGRESS TO DATE

Our education components are primarily covered in our Harvest of the Month program and through our School Gardens. Harvest of the Month activities include:

- Taste testing of the *Harvest of the Month* Item will be done the second and fourth week of each month. (Exception in September will be done the third and fourth week and in June will be done the first week).
- In elementary school, every student trying the *Harvest of the Month* item will receive a sticker with a photo of the featured item.
- Students will be able to vote for *Harvest of the Month* items would like regularly featured on the school menu
- Teachers will receive education fact sheets on the Harvest of the Month item to share with students. Education Fact Sheet will also be available on-line.

We also offer the Chef-RD Demo program using Texas Grown produce. This is a program offered to third and fourth grade students through Dallas ISD FCNS. Chef, registered dietitians, dietetic students and culinary students teach the classes. The purpose of the classes are to: Teach students and parents how to incorporate a variety of vegetables into meals and snacks, using recipes served in school meals as examples and promoting the Harvest of the Month selections. Students learn math skills, facts about Texas farming, nutrition facts and math skills.

As mentioned earlier, Dallas ISD does not mandate a specific school garden curriculum be used exclusively with school gardens. To date, several curricula are being used in conjunction with school gardens. These are:

- REAL School Gardens
- Junior Master Gardener
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Gardens in Community Development

By far, the vast majority of Dallas ISD schools who have gardens use REAL School Gardens curriculum and strategies. RSG has a goal for at least 60% of teachers at each of the partner schools to be using the learning gardens regularly for academic instruction across the subject areas. Students grow potatoes to donate to food pantries before school is out. Students learn soil science and practice their measuring skills; they multiply using basil seeds as manipulatives, use the gardens as a tool to generate descriptive writing, learn conversions and measuring when making recipes in class, and so on and so forth. Five Dallas ISD schools are participating in a research program which uses the Junior Master Gardener, CATCH curriculum, and Walk Across Texas curriculum as interventions. The implementation of these curricula is being closely monitored and documented as well.

Dallas ISD 2nd, 3rd and 4th graders participated in Farm Day at the Fair as part of National Farm to School month and the launch of Dallas ISD Harvest of the Month program. These students were able to meet actual farmers and participate in agricultural activities and demonstrations. The purpose of Farm Day at the Fair is to provide students with opportunities to raise awareness and importance of agricultural in urban youth. This program offers six in-classroom lesson plans, guest speakers to visit classrooms and a field trip to the state fairgrounds to view the demonstrations.

Students at Seagoville's Agriculture and Natural Resources Magnet are propagating Tilapia in an ecosystem with future plans to make the sustainability project pay off. This program is in the process of obtaining the required permits to sell the fish to the general public. The fish currently are being used in experiments, research and for production and can be sold to other tilapia farms. The Seagoville High School currently also has garden beds and a mushroom grow room which is fertilized with the tilapia waste water.

Dallas ISD participated in the *Chef's Move to Schools* initiative and also participated in the *Texas Farm to School Commodity Program* for several years. Seventy-three of the campuses participated in the *USDA Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program* where students had the opportunity to experience fresh fruits and veggies.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

As part of our goal to **to bring awareness to the Farm to School program and the availability of locally grown produce** the Farm to School steering committee is seeking a partnership with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services or another higher learning institution to develop more in-depth nutrition education curriculum aligned with the Harvest of the Month calendar. These lessons would be aligned with current Texas education standards and be used in the classrooms to reinforce other subject areas such as math, science and language arts. We will also be working with our Dallas ISD STEM team and other curriculum developers with-in the district.

GARDEN ACTIVITIES

As part of our goal to **increase student awareness and knowledge about gardening and school gardens**. Activities and objectives for this goal are:

- Create a web-based school garden portal for Dallas ISD teachers
- Identify best practices, resources and sustainability guidelines to be included in a district-wide School Garden portal during 2014-2015 school year.
- Create a "grow" calendar which complements the Harvest of the Month calendar and provide other activity resources for aligning gardens with Farm to School.

CULINARY ACTIVITIES

To support our goal of **bringing awareness to the Farm to School program and the availability of locally grown produce** we will continue to offer the Chef-RD Demo program using Texas Grown

produce. This is a program offered to third and fourth grade students through Dallas ISD FCNS. Chef, registered dietitians, dietetic students and culinary students teach the classes. The purpose of the classes are to: Teach students and parents how to incorporate a variety of vegetables into meals and snacks, using recipes served in school meals as examples and promoting the Harvest of the Month selections. Students learn math skills, facts about Texas farming, nutrition facts and math skills.

FIELD TRIPS

Dallas ISD will continue to participate in Farm Day at the Fair as part of National Farm to School month to support our goal of **bringing awareness to the Farm to School program and the availability of locally grown produce**. Through this event, students will be able to meet actual farmers and participate in agricultural activities and demonstrations. The purpose of Farm Day at the Fair is to provide students with opportunities to raise awareness and importance of agricultural in urban youth. This program offers six in-classroom lesson plans, guest speakers to visit classrooms and a field trip to the state fairgrounds to view the demonstrations.

As we identify farmers who are willing to partner with Dallas ISD, we will recruit farmers to allow students to visit farms and/or have farmers visit classrooms to educate students about farming practices. We also hope to develop a Farm to School video series which features select farmers and highlights successful Farm to School projects such as school gardens at our elementary campuses, Tilapia farming at one of our high schools. These videos would bring outside learning opportunities into the classrooms.

RESOURCES

- » [REAL School Gardens](#)
- » [Junior Master Gardener](#)
- » [Texas Go! Eat! Grow!](#)
- » [Lesson Plans](#), from the National Organization for Agriculture in the Classroom – An extensive list of agriculture-related lesson plans and other resources organized by grade level.
- » [Resources and Tools Database](#), from the Edible Schoolyard Project – Educational resources for the garden classroom, kitchen classroom, academic classroom, and cafeteria, organized by type, grade level, and season!
- » [Farm to School Lesson Plans](#), from Growing Minds - Farm to school activities that incorporate both National and North Carolina State curriculum standards.
- » [Dig In!](#), from USDA's Team Nutrition – Ten inquiry-based lessons that engage 5th and 6th graders in growing, harvesting, tasting, and learning about fruits and vegetables.
- » [The Great Garden Detective Adventure](#), from USDA's Team Nutrition - This eleven-lesson curriculum for 3rd and 4th grades includes bulletin board materials, veggie dice, fruit and vegetable flash cards, and ten issues of Garden Detective News for parents/caregivers.
- » [Farm to School Knowledge Base: For Educators](#), from Food Hub – A list of farm to school educational resources organized by grade level.
- » [Sustainable Agriculture Resources and Programs for K-12 Youth](#), from Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education - A guide to sustainable agriculture-oriented educational programs and curricula that includes direct links as well as program contact information.

- » Making the Farm Connection: A Guide to Field Trips for Farmers, from the Community Alliance with Family Farmers – A guide to planning and conducting farm visits for school groups, for farmers.
- » A Farm Field Trip Guide, from Green Mountain Farm to School – A set of lesson plans for visits to various types of farmers and other agriculture-related destinations; includes tips for farmers and teachers, and sample forms.

Evaluation

BACKGROUND AND PROGRESS TO DATE

We have collected some important quantitative baseline data which will be very helpful in moving forward with our Farm to School evaluation.

- Dallas ISD was able to determine that for the 2012-2013 school year, \$78,700 was spent on Texas Farm to School produce, \$325,377 was spent on produce through TSD Distributing, \$721,993 on bakery goods produced locally, and approximately \$8,000,000 on local dairy through Borden's. Including dairy products, we have determined that based on an average portion cost of \$.23 Dallas ISD has served 39,682,916 servings of locally produced items.
- Identified menu items which are grown/produced locally and available seasonally. These items were included in the new Harvest of the Month program and featured on cafeteria menus. (See attached *Harvest of the Month Plan* and *2013-2014 HOM Outreach Plan* documents).
- Identified farmers/vendors who can provide local, seasonal foods. (See attached *Harvest of the Month Plan* and *2013-2014 HOM Outreach Plan* documents).
- Identified seasonal foods being grown in school gardens and being used in Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Program taste tests which could be integrated into school menus. This activity also became part of the development of the Harvest of the Month documents.
- Identified 36 schools which currently have school gardens in place, of these 36, 26 are supported by a structured gardening program and curriculum. (See attached REAL School Garden summary sheet and Complete List of Dallas ISD School Gardens).

We have identified proven and strong evaluation instruments to use to collect our data. The following tools have been identified and some have been modified to better meet Dallas ISD needs. The following tools have been identified and used:

- *Cornell Garden Based Learning Post-test for Children and Youth*. This tool will be used with very little modifications.
- *Wisconsin Farm to School: One Year Evaluation Report "Wisconsin Farm to School 2010-2011 Student Survey"*. We modified this tool to fit our needs and geographic offerings and we are calling it the *Dallas ISD Farm to School Student Survey*.
- *Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit "School Lunch Recall"*. This tool will be used with slight modifications to pare down from recalling an entire meal to just a "taste".
- *Bearing Fruit: Farm to School Program Evaluation Resources and Recommendations*. "K-12 Food Service Check in Form" and "Local Food Purchase Record". These two evaluation tools will be modified and combined into one tool.
- *Bearing Fruit: Farm to School Program Evaluation Resources and Recommendations*. "New York Survey of K-12 Food Service Directors". We have modified this tool to better meet our specific needs and we call it *Dallas ISD FCNS Survey*.
- *Grower Perspectives on Farm to School A Survey of Interested Farmers, Ranchers and other Producers*. We have modified this tool and call it *Dallas ISD Farmers Interest Survey*.

- *Greener Fields Together Safety Questionnaire*. This tool will not be modified.

We were also privileged to have access to additional data collected in several ongoing studies which Dallas ISD has participated in in the last 18 months. These studies included the following:

- Plate waste study conducted by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services Institute for Obesity Research and Program Evaluation. This study identified vegetable consumption and waste behaviors of K-5th grade students in Texas before and after the implementation of the new USDA Nutrition Standards for School Meals and quantify select nutrient intake of vegetables consumed before and after the implementation of the new USDA Nutrition Standards for School Meals for calories, dietary fiber, potassium, vitamin A, and sodium. See attached report, "School Lunch: What is Served and What is Wasted?"
- Two other plate waste studies were also conducted which we are waiting on the results for. These were the BEN Center and the AHKG. An attached spreadsheet captures which Dallas ISD schools participated in each study.
- Texas Go! Eat! Grow! TGEG is a five-year study designed to determine the effect of interventions such as gardening, nutrition education, and physical activities on children's behaviors related to childhood obesity. The study was a state-wide study and included 5 Dallas ISD schools. See attached Evans Report and supporting TGEG documents: TGEG DISD Schools Cohort; TGEG Draft Process Evaluation Questions; TGEG Student Engagement Questionnaire

STUDENT OUTCOMES

The Dallas ISD Farm to School Steering Committee identified three student outcomes to evaluate and appropriate tools for the evaluation. One of the goals of our Farm to School program is to **bring awareness to the Farm to School program and the availability of locally grown produce**. Two outcomes which support this goal and the evaluation tools used to measure them are:

1. **Students' gains in knowledge and awareness about agriculture, local foods and seasonality.** To measure this outcome we will use the Dallas ISD Farm to School Student Survey which is adapted from the Wisconsin Farm to School 2010-2011 Student Survey. This tool will be used to collect and measure student data regarding student knowledge and attitudes about healthy and local foods.
2. **Students try new fruits and vegetables.** The second tool to be used will be used immediately following taste test opportunities such as the Harvest of the Month Tasty Teasers and will be an adaptation of the *Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit "School Lunch Recall"*.
3. **Students gain knowledge and awareness about gardening/school gardens.** The tool used to evaluate this outcome will be an adaptation of the *Cornell Garden Based Learning Post Test for Children and Youth*. This tool will be used to collect and measure student data regarding student knowledge and/or attitudes about gardening and agriculture post participation in school garden activities. This tool will be used at the end of each school year at select schools which have a school garden beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.

FOOD SERVICE OUTCOMES

The Dallas ISD Farm to School Steering Committee identified one Food Service outcomes to evaluate and three appropriate tools for the evaluation. These include:

1. **Purchases from local sources increase.** The first tool to be used to evaluate this outcome will be a modified version of the New York Survey of K-12 Food Service Directors and will be administered annually at the end of each school year beginning with the 2013-2014 school year. This tool will provide a comparison from year to year. The additional tools will be a tool which is a merging of the *Bearing Fruit Farm to School Program Evaluation Resources Recommendations* "Local Food Purchases Record" and the "K-12 Food Service Record". These tools provide monthly tracking of local purchases.

FARMER/PRODUCER OUTCOMES

The Dallas ISD Farm to School Steering Committee has identified two Farmer/Producer outcomes to evaluate and have created appropriate tools to use for the evaluation. These include:

1. **Increase producer awareness and participation in Farm to School.** Dallas ISD F2S has created a Farmer/Producer Interest survey tool to be administered to farmers beginning in January 2014. Our tool is based on the *Grower Perspectives on Farm to School A Survey of Interested Farmers, Ranchers and Other Producers*. This tool will be given to farmers throughout the year to determine farmer interest and/or readiness to participate in Farm to School activities.
2. **Producers meet GAP and GHP certifications.** Dallas ISD F2S has partnered with Hardies Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Company and their Greener Fields Together program. This tool will be used to determine farmers' safety and GAP readiness. This tool also will assist farmers in being admitted into the Greener Fields Together program and qualify for financial assistance with independent audits.

USING EVALUATION RESULTS

One of the most important parts of evaluation is determining how to use the results to have the most impact. The primary purpose of most of our evaluation is to determine if our programs and activities are having the desired impact on students and on our community. The next purpose of our evaluation is to provide key information for our stakeholders (school staff, parents, students, farmers and distributors). Additionally, if we receive funding for our program, our evaluation results will be used to communicate to our funders that our program is meeting their goals as well. Our intent is that our evaluation results will help us to tell our personal story of Farm to School and its impact on our students and local economy.

- **Student Outcomes:**
 - We will use our evaluation results in student outcomes to determine if our Harvest of the Month materials are effective. Most of our materials are designed in-house and can easily be modified, updated and/or refined to improve, change and/or refine messaging.
 - We will also use outcomes to assess if students are trying new fruits and vegetables and if this is impacting their eating habits at home and at school.
 - We will also be looking at school gardens impact on student awareness of local foods and agriculture.

- **Food Service Outcomes:**
 - We will be evaluating if we are able to increase spending on local foods by leveraging our DoD Fresh dollars, seeking out local producers and highlighting local produce on our cafeteria menus and in taste tests. We intend to be aggressive in changing our spending habits especially in the area of fresh produce and will be tracking on a monthly basis. By tracking monthly we hope to be able to make corrections more quickly.
- **Farmer/Producer Outcomes:**
 - In order for our district to increase the amount we purchase locally, we must have local producers to buy from. It is imperative to identify farmers who are interested in selling their products specifically to our district. Since we do not purchase directly from farmers, we rely on our distributor and wholesaler to partner with local farmers. We must identify farmers who are interested then work collaboratively with the distributors/wholesalers to get farmers ready to supply the district's needs. This process is about building relationships, so getting farmers involved with schools and building trust is critical. Once farmers are identified as being interested in partnering, immediate follow-up is required and clear communication with the farmer about Dallas ISD needs.

All evaluation results will be shared with the Dallas ISD Farm to School Steering Committee members. Further break down of results will also be shared with appropriate audiences and stakeholders (school leadership, teachers, students, farmers, etc.) and next steps determined. Evaluation data will be collected in regular intervals and reviewed and analyzed in a timely manner.

RESOURCES

- » Bearing Fruit: Farm to School Program Evaluation Resources and Recommendations, from the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute – This comprehensive resource introduces readers to the types of farm to school evaluations that practitioners can conduct as well as the tools and resources available for measuring impact.
- » Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit, from the National Farm to School Network and the University of North Carolina – A collection of survey instruments and other evaluation tools aimed at assessing several different farm to school-related outcomes.
- » Evaluation of the Davis Farm to School Program, from the University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program at Davis – A great example of an in-depth evaluation of four farm to school related goals: to 1) increase farm fresh food in school food offerings; 2) reduce solid waste through a comprehensive district recycling program; 3) provide education opportunities to promote a healthy lifestyle and develop the whole child; and 4) engage the community and evaluate programs to provide information to the community.
- » Do Farm-to School Programs Make a Difference? Findings and Future Research Needs, from the Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition, Vol. 3(2/3) 2008 – This article by Anupama Joshi, Andrea Misako Azuma, and Gail Feenstra looks at 15 studies to assess the impacts of farm-to-school programs and identifies future research needs.
- » Connecting Classrooms, Cafeterias & Communities: Promising Practices of Farm to School Education Summary of Evaluation Findings, from PEER Associates and the University of Vermont – A report on a 2010 evaluation project to explore the impact of farm to school programs in Vermont on student fruit and vegetable consumption.

- » Colorado Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit, from Colorado Farm to School – This toolkit is a work in progress, but it already contains some great resources for selecting outcomes and measurement tools to evaluate student, community, food service, producer, parent, and school administrator impacts.
- » Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit, from USDA's Economic Research Service - This report provides a toolkit of standardized measurement tools for assessing various aspects of community food security including community food production resources.
- » Wisconsin Farm to School: One Year Evaluation Report, from Wisconsin Farm to School. This report summarizes the results of the first year of Wisconsin Farm to School. The report includes many resources such as surveys and other evaluation tools.
- » Cornell Garden Based Learning Post-test for Children and Youth, school garden evaluation tool appropriate for children and youth.
- » Greener Fields Together, from Hardies Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Company. A program developed by Hardies to advance sustainability from seed to fork. This program connects local farms, national farms, local purveyors and hospitality partners. This program assists local farmers with assessing safety needs and also financially assists farmers with costs associated with independent audits.

Program Sustainability

BACKGROUND AND PROGRESS TO DATE

Prior to the 2012-2013 school year, Dallas ISD had numerous projects in place which supported Farm to School initiatives. Dallas ISD had approximately 36 schools with gardens on site being used to enhance existing classroom curriculum; Dallas ISD participated in the *Chef's Move to Schools* initiative and also participated in the *Texas Farm to School Commodity Program* for several years. Seventy-three of the campuses participated in the *USDA Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Program* where students had the opportunity to experience fresh fruits and veggies. However, none of these programs were collectively operated and/or evaluated as Farm to School initiatives, but all operated independently of one another. In June of 2012, the district applied for the inaugural Farm to School Planning grant. In November 2012 the district was awarded the grant and began its planning phase of Farm to School. The general overview and focus of the original planning grant was that these existing programs needed to be more closely integrated with one another in order for students to receive the highest benefit of consuming locally grown/produced food.

The timing was right to implement a strategic planning process to bring these related programs together under one umbrella and initiative. First, over the years, Dallas ISD had begun to build strong relationships with food vendors who procure locally and regionally. The plan was to leverage these relationships to increase the amount of local and regional offerings in our school cafeterias so they better reflect the foods the students have grown themselves in school gardens and/or sampled in taste tests. Secondly, the district is mandated by state legislation to implement coordinated school health plans K-8 which include elements which are supported by goals of F2S initiatives. Thirdly, we had commitments from key Dallas ISD decision makers and community partners to serve on the F2S planning committee.

Additionally, Dallas ISD was also beginning collaboration with the *Texas Grow! Eat! Go!* project over the next three years. This USDA project is a research project overseen by University of Texas (UT) Health Center to determine the efficacy of 2 intervention programs in elementary schools across Texas which participate in *Coordinated Approach to Child Health* (CATCH). The interventions include Junior Master Gardener and Walk Across Texas curriculum.

We will be seeking grant funding from USDA for an Implementation Grant.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

We believe that our Farm to School program has strong institutional support. Our school is in the process of adopting a new comprehensive wellness policy in which key Farm to School strategies will be supported. Already our Harvest of the Month Tasty Teasers activity is part of the Coordinated School Health plan and a featured monthly activity. Local food procurement will most definitely become a permanent part of the school food budget as almost 100% of milk purchases are already local and a significant portion of bread products are

also procured locally. We are intentionally and thoughtfully finding ways in which we can also increase local produce purchases as well.

Our school gardens have already become very institutionalized and part of campus cultures. We hope that district-wide Farm to School will only continue to grow and solidify these gardens and educational opportunities. We will strengthen the connection between garden activities and cafeteria offerings and other Farm to School activities. Each individual campus is already responsible for raising their own funds for school gardens and this model has worked very well for our district. We will continue to keep in place this funding model for school garden activities.

GRANTS

We will be seeking an implementation grant from USDA. We are seeking approximately \$300,000 over the next three years. We will also identify other local, regional and national Farm to School grants to apply for. These funds would be used primarily to develop educational materials, marketing materials to promote Farm to School, development of a school garden web-based portal. We also hope to be able to collaborate with other health, nutrition education, agricultural and economic development initiatives for funding opportunities.

DONATIONS & FUNDRAISING EVENTS & PARTNERSHIPS

Currently individual schools are responsible for raising funds for their own school garden support. Schools most commonly seek donations and host fundraising events to raise these funds. Schools also rely heavily on volunteers and in-kind donations to keep gardens running. Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) have been key in the success of most of our school gardens and have raised funds and donated them specifically to garden support.

Building supply, gardening supply and landscaping companies have providing support in the past and we hope to continue these partnerships and collaborations in the future. These partners have provided essential supplies for building and maintaining gardens.

A new partner, Dallas Charting the Course, is wanting to collaborate specifically with Dallas ISD Farm to School evaluation regarding taste tests on campuses. We are currently working on the parameters and specifications on this collaboration.

RESOURCES

- » Grants, Loans, and Support, from the USDA Know Your Farmer Know Your Food Initiative – This webpage lists over two dozen programs at USDA that can help build local and regional food systems.
- » Farm to School Fundraising, from the National Farm to School Network – Tips for acquiring funds for your farm to school program through grants, donations, and special events.
- » A+ Fundraisers for High Schools: A guide to having a successful fundraiser while keeping your community healthy, from the New York City Healthy High Schools Initiative – This thorough guide presents lots of ideas for healthy, junk food-free fundraisers such as family dinner events, flea markets, fitness-based fundraisers, plant sales, and more! Resources, pricing and profit information, tips, and steps and provided for each idea.
- » School Fundraiser, from the REAP Food Group – One example of a fundraiser based on selling local and fairly traded goods.

- » Local Fundraising Strategies and Grants, from the American Community Gardening Association – Ideas for obtaining monetary and in-kind donations for school and community gardens, as well as a list of gardening grants.
- » Online Grant-Writing Training Courses, from the Foundation Center – Several free, online training courses and tutorials meant to help users enjoy better success in approaching foundations.
- » A Working History of Farm to School Legislation in Oregon, from Ecotrust – A great example of how state-level legislation and funding supportive of farm to school has evolved over time in Oregon.